THE HISTORY OF LORD STANTON.

A NOVEL.

By a Gentleman of the *Middle Temple*,
Author of the TRIAL, or History of CHARLES HORTON.

VOL. IV.

LONDON:
Printed for T. VERNOR, in *St. Michael's Alley, Cornhill.*

(Price bound Fifteen Shillings.)

HARVARD COLLEGE LIBRARY
THE GIFT OF
FRIENDS OF THE LIBRARY
Nov. 4, 1929

3427
49.127
8.4

THE HISTORY OF LORD STANTON.

LETTER LV.

To Miſs CLINTON in continuation.

MY aunt replied to what I had juſt ſaid,

"Give me leave, Matilda; I am a much better judge of "thoſe things than you are. Yes, Miſs, "you have given him encouragement, and "in my preſence too. You have been "familiar with him, have received him

" with pleaſure, have chatted to him with " the greateſt freedom. If you don't call " this encouragement, I don't know what is. " You never expreſſed any diſguſt or diſlike " to him, and I and all the world looked " upon him as the man you had ſelected " for your huſband, but without any re- " gard to your reputation, or that of your " family, you have ſtrange notions, which " ought not to be indulged."

" Really, Madam, this is a language I " cannot either underſtand or compre- " hend. I know not in what manner " you would have me treat a nobleman, " who viſits at your houſe, and who did me " the honour to think favourably of me. " Would you have had me fly out of the " room every time he made his appearance? " or in what particular manner ſhould I " have expreſſedmy diſapprobation of him? " for I believe you know I have ever de- " clared againſt receiving him as an huſ- " band, and have done every thing in my

" power

" power to prevent his taking any trouble
" about me: and this I have often declared
" to you. But theſe ſuſpicions of yours,
" Madam, concerning theſe ſtrange no-
" tions, as you call them, that I have taken
" into my head, are very injurious, and
" have ſerved to render me extremely ri-
" diculous to the world, about a gentleman
" whom I am ſcarcely acquainted with,
" and in whoſe favour I have heard you
" ſpeak in the higheſt terms: and however
" my inexperience might ſuffer me to be
" deceived and impoſed upon, yet I did
" not think that you could have been ſo
" much miſtaken."

" Yes, Miſs, the wiſeſt are to be im-
" poſed upon at ſome times, and I cannot
" have penetration ſufficient to develope
" ſuch artful diſguiſes. But I have very
" good grounds for my ſpeaking of him in
" this manner. Excluſive of that myſte-
" rious air and behaviour he ever had, and
" the inexplicable conduct he ever pur-

 " ſued,

"ſued, we have learned, even from his ſer-
"vant, that he is not what he ſeems to be.
"He is not what he ſeems to be. Mark
"that, Matilda—that muſt imply ſome-
"thing very bad, for no one ever yet
"wiſhed to appear worſe than he is, and
"if he was better we ſhould ſoon know it.
"Beſides, nobody is acquainted with him.
"Was he a gentleman of either family or
"eſtate, he would be known, and we
"ſhould have ſome teſtimonials of his rank
"in life, and then be able to judge of
"him."

"Very true, very true indeed," added Sir Marmaduke. "Your aunt ſays very "rightly, indeed, Matilda: I never heard "of him till that plaguy affair at Ranelagh. "No, no, he can be nobody indeed—ſome "ſharper, or Iriſh fortune-hunter."

I found it would be in vain to oppoſe ſuch a tide, therefore remained ſilent. But I could not help thinking that a great part

of this information was falſe, at leaſt I hope ſo: for there was an inexpreſſible modeſty and candour in his manner, that was ſurely inconſiſtent with the character of a ſharper. I am very much miſtaken in him, if he turns out to be what my aunt ſays. This is intelligence of my Lord Averſton's procuring: and I am well convinced that he would ſpare nothing, whether true or falſe, to put him out of my head, if once he imagined I had any notions of him.

There was a frankneſs, and honeſt openneſs in Mr. Benſon's countenance and behaviour that I cannot reconcile with the idea I have formed of a villain, as they would make him. My ſilence induced my aunt to think that ſhe had convinced me of the truth of what ſhe ſaid, and taking that for granted, ſhe did not fail to give me a ſpecimen of her prudence, and abilities for railing. She abuſed the unfortunate Benſon, exhauſted all her pa-

negyric upon Lord Averſton, and gave me ſome very ſeaſonable admonitions, as ſhe called them, on the imprudence of my conduct. You may conclude that my journey did not pleaſe me very much, as I was obliged to liſten to my aunt's diſplay of her own good qualities: for ſhe even brought herſelf for the example of all the wiſe and prudent maxims ſhe laid down. Sir Marmaduke too, whom I ſuppoſed to have a great averſion to Lord Averſton, either took his part, or tacitly aſſented to all his wife ſaid in praiſe of him. I was happy when I arrived in the country, and retired to my own chamber. Fatigue made me ſleep; and I forgot my aunt's inſtructions, Mr. Benſon and Lord Averſton all together. The next morning I poſſeſſed myſelf of my favourite little ſtudy, which you have heard me ſo often praiſe. Oh Fanny, how happy ſhould I be if you were my companion in it! From thence I write to you now. Here only I can be ſaid to be

be miſtreſs of myſelf. Let me give you a deſcription of it. It was built at the requeſt of my good friend, Mr. Daubigny, who ſuperintended the work, and pitched upon the ſituation. It conſiſts of two apartments, in one of which my books, harpſichord, and writing materials are placed; the other, a ſmall parlour, joins it, where I ſee every body that viſits me; but there are very pretty views from the windows. I cannot paint them to you in the colours they deſerve, but I hope you will come and ſee them yourſelf ſome time or another. Here then, if I receive no pleaſure, I meet with no pain; and if Mr. Benſon is abſent, ſo is Lord Averſton. Let me not appear unworthy your friendſhip for thinking of a man yet, whom ſuch pains has been taken to make me look upon in the worſt light. The more pains, the more I ſuſpected artifice, and the more I was determined to inveſtigate his character if I could. Therefore, dear Fanny,

if you can find out any thing about him, whether good or bad, let me hear it. But, perhaps, I am plaguing you, and troubling myſelf, to no purpoſe. He has never taken the pains to enquire after me, and the repulſe he met with at my aunt's, has prevented his ever calling again. I am not in the way, and it is very likely I may never ſee him again. I wiſh I had never ſeen him. But though that may be the caſe, yet it will be a ſatisfaction to me to know whether what is reported of him be true, that I may, for the future, be able to mark thoſe who ought to be ſhunned. You may judge, by the length of my letter, that I am in a ſolitude, and have nothing elſe to do but tire you with my long epiſtles. However, I will make an agreement with you, ſend me as long, and I will read them with patience and pleaſure. Adieu, my friend, and let me be remembered to your worthy brother and family.

MATILDA CONYERS.

LETTER

LETTER LVI.

To Mr. THOMPSON.

I Muſt complain, though I am ſenſible that complaints will not avail me. I cannot avoid grieving, though grief cannot remove the cauſe of my affliction, or reſtore the object that occaſions it. Ah! Thompſon, I begin to feel for your ſituation now. I pitied you as a friend, but now I ſympathiſe with you as a man involved in the ſame diſtreſs, and compare my caſe with yours. How true it is, that misfortunes can only make us know ourſelves, and feel for others! We are unable to judge of the weight of what we never carried, nor can be ſenſible of the power of woes we never endured. I read your letter, where you ſo forcibly deſcribe the effects of your paſſion. When you paint your diſtraction, and the conflict that you ſuſtain between love and honour, my tears

flow involuntarily, and my heart, ſoftened by the force of the tender paſſion, intereſts itſelf in the welfare of its friend. I ſhould reaſon as you do, and from what I have already experienced, I fear I ſhould act ſo too. But I am not thus ſituated, nor obliged to expoſe the weakneſs of my heart. What can reſiſt the ſubtle, the piercing flame?— Alas nothing. Reaſon and argument are feeble barriers, oppoſed to the united attacks of beauty and love. Did I ever imagine that the ſight and converſation of a woman, however fair, would have raiſed ſuch a commotion in my heart? That my thoughts ſhould be ſolely engroſſed by her? and this too without any intimacy, ſcarce an acquaintance. But I knew not that ſhe had ſuch an hold of my affections till ſhe was gone. While there was a proſpect of ſeeing her, hope ſupported my ſpirits, and expectation made me think leſs of the time ſhe was abſent. But now, no hope cheers me, no expecta-

tion beguiles me. All is void and cheerleſs. I ramble, without knowing it, to that part of the town where ſhe dwelt. I gaze at the houſe, and find ſome indulgence even in the contemplation of the ſolitary manſion. But I take care not to make myſelf ridiculous in the day-time. The more I think of Matilda, the more I wiſh to do it. The weakneſs grows upon me. Is it weakneſs to love an amiable, a charming woman? Ah were there any hopes of her returning my paſſion, it would not be ſo. But ſhe is engaged to Lord Averſton, and I am wretched. In vain would reaſon repreſent to me the abſurdities of placing my affections upon a woman that has already diſpoſed of her heart. But love is involuntary, and we cannot reſiſt its force. Who would have a fever that could avoid it? And this is the fever of the ſoul. I might find out the place of her retreat, and purſue her if I thought that her inclinations were free. I would force her to

pity me. She ſhould he convinced that I merited compaſſion, that my heart was honeſt, and my paſſion ſincere. She ſhould reward the purity and zeal of my affection only for its own ſake, fully aſſured that I could not be exceeded in the ardency of my love. But every ſuch attempt would be now in vain. Her guardian, by removing her from the object of her regard, has only encreaſed her tenderneſs for him. Idle notion! to imagine that reſtraint can alter the ſentiments of the heart, or prevent the thoughts from being employed in the manner they beſt like. Oh! 'tis the relief which kind heaven has given to the wretched, to eſcape, in fancy, from the woes that ſurround them, and be cheated into ideal happineſs. Matilda is now thinking on the man ſhe left behind her. She pities his pains, becauſe her own are ſimilar; ſhe joins him in the wiſh he makes to be with her; their ſouls, actuated by the ſame ſentiments, form the ſame hopes and fears.

The

The reſtraint that authority puts upon them now, muſt be removed at ſome time or another, and, in the interim, only prepares them for the joy of ſeeing each other again.—'Tis done,

> And raptures crown their meeting
> Which Love ne'er felt before!

Oh Thompſon! is it to be thought on with patience? Perhaps if I had ſeen her before Lord Averſton I might have been lucky enough to have engaged her heart. But now it is all over! The hour is paſſed, and I am the moſt unfortunate of mankind. Good heaven! what would I give to change ſituations with Lord Averſton, to be conſcious that the charming maid was thinking of me only; that ſhe was reckoning the moments in which ſhe was ſeparated, and anticipating the time of our meeting! I am the prey of diſappointment and deſpair. My vanity, in imagining that ſhe looked

looked upon me with a favourable eye, only makes my ſituation leſs tolerable. I wiſh I had never purſued this ſcheme that my mother pointed out: it has only ſerved to render me unhappy. For if I can judge of my own ſentiments and inclinations, ſo deep is the impreſſion which Matilda has made on me, that time will never efface it. I recollect what you told me of reſigning Miſs Mitcombe, whom you juſtly remarked I only fancied I loved. Were it in my power to inſure but a ſmile from Matilda, no conſideration, however valuable, ſhould purchaſe it from me. Alas! Thompſon, I am taught to love, when the poſſibility of gratifying my paſſion is entirely removed. Adieu. But let me not add to your woes, by deſiring you to pity your unhappy friend,

GEORGE BENSON.

LETTER

LETTER LVII.

To WILLIAM ROGERS, Eſq.

Greenhill Park,

"THUS far our arms with ſucceſs have "been crowned:" but leſt you ſhould not know where Greenhill Park is, or any thing about the matter, know then, dear Will, that I am at Sir Marmaduke Grigſby's—that I ſee Matilda every day—that—that in ſhort I hope to bring matters to bear in a much leſs time than even I expected. Benſon is fairly off the ſcent. I have told him that Matilda is engaged to me, or I engaged to her, it is all the ſame; when an obligation is reciprocal the acknowledgement of one party is ſufficient; and as I have loved her ſo long, the leaſt ſhe can do is to love me again, and then you know we are really engaged. This being done, and giving it

out I was going down to my own houſe, I flung myſelf into a poſt-chaiſe, and travelled with all poſſible ſpeed after my fair chace. I took care to arrive in the evening at this place, all diſorder, totally *diſhabillé*, concern and anxiety in my countenance. Fortunately the Baronet had no company: but if he had, as I was ſuperior to forms, I ſhould not have changed my dreſs which I deſigned ſhould convince Matilda of the eagerneſs of my deſire to ſee her. They were all together walking in the park. I appeared before them, to the ſurpriſe of Matilda: and Lady Grigſby affected all neceſſary aſtoniſhment to convince her niece that ſhe knew nothing of the matter.

"Lord, bleſs me," exclaimed her Ladyſhip, "what occaſioned us this honour, "my Lord?"

"Ah, Lady Grigſby," returned I, with a mournful air, and a melancholy tone of voice, "is that queſtion neceſſary? What

"reproaches

" reproaches do you deſerve from me for
" leaving town without my being ac-
" quainted with your deſign, or ſuppoſing
" that I could remain in any place where
" Miſs Conyers was not. Ah Lady Grigſ-
" by, you have no excuſe to plead, you
" were acquainted with the intereſts and
" wiſhes of my heart. I have often, tho'
" in vain, entreated you to repreſent the
" ardour and ſincerity of my paſſion in
" proper colours to your lovely niece. I
" have not been ſo fortunate as to prevail
" on you to undertake an hapleſs lover's
" cauſe, but you knew the violence of my
" affection and ſhould not have trifled
" with it. I have been the moſt miſerable
" man on earth. A matter of buſineſs
" detained me in the country for two days
" after you had left London. The third,
" when I called at your houſe in hopes of
" ſeeing you, I was informed of your de-
" parture; the news ſtruck me to the heart.
" In vain did I promiſe rewards, or menace

" your

" your ſervant. He was true to the truſt
" you had repoſed in him, nor would he
" tell me the place of your retreat. Had
" you been a witneſs to the emotions, or
" knew the torments this abrupt depar-
" ture of yours occaſioned, you would
" have repented of taking this ſtep with-
" out my knowledge: even Matilda her-
" ſelf would have pitied me. My perplex-
" ity at this extraordinary retreat was very
" great, nor could I conceive when I
" ſhould be able to find you: till recol-
" lecting that as your journey was ſo ſud-
" den, in all probability you were here, as
" you had made no preparations for leav-
" ing the kingdom. Here then I have
" moſt fortunately found you: for I was
" determined not to give over a ſearch
" where my happineſs was concerned, till
" I had known the cauſe why you have ſo
" unkindly removed from me a Lady
" whom I cannot help adoring; whether
" it was to put an end to my life and hopes

" at

" at once, and to give me the mortifica-
" tion of knowing, before I expired, that I
" was deteſted and abhorred.

" Oh, dear Lord Averſton," replied her Ladyſhip, " don't talk in ſo melancholy a " ſtrain for heaven's ſake. No, no, you are " not ſo fond of dying."

" I had rather die, than loſe her for " whoſe ſake only I wiſh to live."

The inſulting fair one maintained an obſtinate ſilence during this converſation, nor could ſhe be brought to deliver her ſentiments one way or another. Lady Grigſby inſiſted on my taking ſome refreſhment after my journey, as ſhe was ſure I muſt be greatly fatigued. In we went to the houſe, and there I had the happineſs of ſaluting the angelic Matilda. Upon my ſoul, Rogers, even as a woman ſhe is very well worth all the pains I take for her. A kiſs—I had a kiſs, man, that would thaw an aged hermit's blood, and make him young again. Matilda was always

ways inclined to the ſerious, a little too much of the Engliſhwoman in her compoſition; but I fancy ſhe is now rather more reſerved than ever. What ſhe has got in her little head I know not, but it ſhall go hard if I don't find it out. Well, here I have been theſe three days then, and were it not for the charming girl that animates my purſuits, and fills me with hope and deſire, I would not ſtay here three hours: to be ſure the time I ſpend with her is agreeable; is happy; otherwiſe it would be a moſt horrid life I ſhould lead. The Knight ſtuns me with politics, and his wife burthens me with civilities. Purling ſtreams, ſhady bowers, and all thoſe pretty romantic ſcenes, are not at all to my taſte; but I muſt ſupport them. You would not know me, Rogers, if you were to meet me in the ſtreet, ſo much am I altered. The gallant, gay Lothario has droped his creſt. No more the haughty roving Averſton, I am dwindled into a mere lover,

lover, at leaſt in appearance. I am melancholy, penſive, ſigh often, neglect myſelf, and have all thoſe pretty acts which your true lovers uſe. Thank heaven I can command my paſſions. I ſeldom let them run away with me. I have had an opportunity of urging my paſſion to Matilda ſince I came down; but all in vain. She ſtill refuſes to receive me as a lover, and aſſures me my ſuit will be entirely fruitleſs: but yet ſhe converſes with me, as familiarly as with any body elſe; and I have no reaſon to complain of her behaviour, but when I am particular to her. If I was ſure ſhe was totally indifferent to me, I would contrive ſome other means than I now uſe to make her alter her conduct towards me; but as her heart is a ſtranger to deceit, or even the appearance of it, I muſt imagine that ſhe only means to try me before ſhe avows her inclination. Women look upon all that foolery as neceſſary; but they are ſeldom the better for it. If ſhe really hated

ed me, I ſuppoſe that it would be viſible in her words and actions. She would not treat me with that complacency which I meet from her, and which ſerves to delude me at leaſt, ſhould it turn out what I do not expect. This demeanour then gives me hopes, and Lady Grigſby confirms them. Have her I muſt, and I may ſay have her I will. She has raiſed my deſires, and ſhe will anſwer my neceſſities: my honour is piqued at heing thus baffled, and I am determined upon rendering myſelf ſucceſsful. A thouſand things may be done in the country, and in a houſe where every one is devoted to my will. I ſhould be ſorry I was obliged to practiſe any other arts than thoſe which love and war will warrant. But rather than fail, every thing muſt be attempted. After going theſe lengths, to be diſappointed of Matilda is what I cannot, will not bear. The field is now my own, and I will endeavour to keep it clear of rivals. Write to me, Rogers,

gers, and help me to paſs ſome time away in this ſolitude.

Yours truly,

AVERSTON.

LETTER LVIII.

To Lord AVERSTON.

SUCCESS attend thee, thou gallant Lord; it muſt—the haughty and ſtubborn Matilda muſt yield to thy ſuperior addreſs and good ſenſe. May you long revel in the arms of that proud beauty, and teach her, in your turn, to know the pangs of contempt and ſlight. The maxim you have ſo often inculcated and ſo fortunately perſued, that importunity and opportunity are not to be reſiſted, will appear verified in your ſituation. I ſhall expect to hear every poſt, that, like another Dido and Æneas, you got

got into ſome cave together; or, like another Venus and Adonis, the friendly cover of ſome ſhady grove, conceals your joys from the peering eye of the enquiſitive ſun. The country is the place for inſpiring ſoft ideas: and with your knowledge of the ſex, you will take care to mollify the heart of this obdurate maid. Perhaps this air of coldneſs ſhe aſſumes, is but to enhance the merit of ſurrendring, and by a compariſon with your former ſufferings, heighten your pleaſures when ſhe becomes yours: this I muſt conclude to be the caſe. Then thou wilt triumph: but I ſhall not have occaſion to rejoice, I fear—for my affairs are really in a very melancholly way. Thompſon has engroſſed the ear and eye of Charlotte, and her heart is gone too. I muſt commence an hopeleſs lover, while you have the conſummation of your wiſhes within your reach. I go to viſit Charlotte She ſcarcely looks at me: ſhe will not liſten to

any

any thing I ſay; ſhe heeds not my dejection, and my ſighs paſs unnoticed. My ſiſter can find no opportunity of entertaining her alone; even my ſiſter, who is my beſt and unwearied advocate, can have no influence over her now. The cruel maid ſhuns us both; Thompſon, has prevailed, and I am defeated. This circumſtance has occaſioned me this trouble, eſpecially as I had fixed my affections upon this girl, and once flattered myſelf that I was more than not diſagreeable to her. I form many ſchemes to reeſtabliſh myſelf with her, but my ſiſter who is perfectly acquainted with her diſpoſition, and the heat of my heart, gives me very little comfort upon the occaſion, and tells me that the ſincerity ſhe has even found in Charlotte, renders her an utter foe to all diſſimulation, and that if ſhe has once even aſſumed an appearance of regard for Thompſon, that it muſt have proceeded from her ſenti-

ments having a biaſs in his favour, and ſhe concludes that I have very little chance for altering them. But that I might not be thrown into deſpair, ſhe let me know there was yet a ray of hope for me, if I could improve it to proper advantage, and this is the amount of what ſhe told me. Thompſon, in his younger days, and before he knew the world, paid his addreſſes to a girl, who had ſome relations living in this part of the country, with whom ſhe reſided. He was extremely ſecret in the conduct of this amour, but not ſo cloſe as he wiſhed to be. Girls will talk, and liſten; Kitty became acquainted with this whole affair. But as this former flame of Thompſon's was removed out of the county, and my ſiſter knew not whether ſhe was alive or dead, ſhe never mentioned this circumſtance to me before, thinking it would be uſeleſs. However, the other day ſhe was informed that this girl was returned again,

again, as ſhe ſuppoſed ignorant of Thompſon's attachment to Charlotte, and that I might now have the opportunity of diſplacing my rival in the affections of my miſtreſs, by making this whole affair known to her. Perhaps Kitty may be premature, perhaps her information is not well grounded. Perhaps they may have had ſome quarrel that ſhe knows nothing of, and this affair is broken off by mutual conſent. I will endeavour to find it out; but even then, it will be extremely diſagreeable to me to make myſelf pleaſing in Charlotte's eyes, only by expoſing the faults of my rival. It is ungenerous: though I confeſs, that an affection like mine would juſtify every proceeding. Perhaps abſence may have quenched the flame he once had for this girl, and which only now burns for Charlotte. If I undeceive her in this particular, I ſhall be of ſervice to them both: I ſhall ſhew her that her preſent admirer is falſe to ano-

ther woman, and that ſhe may hereafter ſhare the ſame fate. I ſhall reſtore to the arms of the ſlighted fair the man whom ſhe loves, and prevent his deſtroying her peace for ever. But how ſhall I be ſure that Charlotte will liſten to me with more attention after this diſcovery, than before it? and to what purpoſe then ſhall I make myſelf appear jealous, malicious, and hateful? Will Charlotte eſteem me the more for diſcovering the crimes of a man whom ſhe is determined to love, and which the knowledge of the preference he has given her over a woman whom he formerly admired, may alſo ſerve to endear the more to her? Give me your advice, trace out the method I muſt purſue. I cannot think of loſing her quietly: and I fear, I ſhall not be able to recover her loſt affections. Every way there is nothing but diſappointment and vexation that meet me. Write to me, and point out the road that will lead me

to

to the enjoyment of my wiſhes. Yours ever.

WILLIAM ROGERS.

LETTER LIX.

To Miſs CLINTON.

I Thank you ſincerely my dear Fanny, for the trouble you have taken, and though I cannot have all the ſatisfaction I wiſhed from your enquiries, yet it is ſome pleaſure to find that Mr. Benſon has been known by people of faſhion, and has had the countenance of ſo reſpectable a family as Sir Thomas Mitcombe's. But, nevertheleſs, it ſeems very remarkable to me, that they ſhould know ſo very little of him, and yet common fame point him out as a match for Miſs Mitcombe. But it does not appear plainly from your letter, whether he ever ſeri-

ouſly paid his addreſſes to her, or whether it was only rumour. But Sir Thomas's ſiſter ſpeaking ſo highly in his favour, indicates ſome merit in him: for ſhe bears ſo good a character, that it is not probable ſhe would violate truth upon his account. Still then my doubts are not ſatisfied, nor ſhould I have a juſtification to offer even to myſelf, if I ſhould act contrary to the deſires of my uncle, and obey the dictates of my own nonſenſical head. There are many objections at preſent againſt gratifying my own wiſhes; but there are almoſt inſuperable bars againſt complying with my aunt's. Lord Averſton is growing more aſſiduous than ever. He never forſakes me: He pretends to be dejected, ſighs often, ſpeaks little, and affects to neglect his perſon. Theſe ſigns in a man whom I liked, perhaps might make ſome impreſſion on me. But I have ſuch an opinion of his Lordſhip's artifice, that I cannot look upon

upon him to be ſincere in any thing; ſo ſtrong is prejudice! and in this inſtance it is impoſſible to overcome it, though I wiſh to give my reaſon all the fair-play in the world. Another circumſtance, that does not tend to encreaſe my good opinion of him, is, that I do not think him entirely innocent of my removal from London, and look upon him as the cauſe of my preſent perſecution. However, I have patience enough to bear it all: and nothing ſhall make me do what I ought to be aſhamed of, what I ſhould bluſh for myſelf, or make my friend bluſh for me. The time will expire in which I am to be ſubject to the whims and caprices of others: and though I will not forſake the paths of prudence to gratify my own inclination, I will not be miſerable to pleaſe any body elſe. The conſequence will be, that I may act prudently, but live unhappily. You will ſay this is reaſoning diſpaſ-

ſionately; that my heart is not intereſted, or I could not think of giving up what I look upon as happineſs, only to avoid the cenſures of the malevolent or the ignorant. You wrong me. I ſhould deſpiſe their cenſures, if I was conſcious that my actions were proper: yet even in that caſe, it is a ſatisfaction to have the approbation of the world, as conſequent to our conduct. But you know my ſentiments, my dear Fanny: and tho' I have an heart that is too ſuſceptable for the happineſs or peace of its poſſeſſor; though I cannot prevent its forming wiſhes; or repreſs the tender ſenſations that riſe involuntarily in it; yet I will not indulge or give way to thoſe paſſions which would lead me aſtray, and make me condemn myſelf. It is more worthy to be the martyr of ſelf-denial ſupported by conſcious prudence, than to ſuffer by a gratification of our wiſhes, when every hour brings condemnation, ſelf-

ſelf-conviction along with it. Till I can find in Mr. Benſon thoſe qualities which ſhould recommend him to me, I will ſtrive to forget him. I am miſtaken, I mean I will endeavour not to think of him: and perhaps I might effect that ſooner if I was by myſelf, than when Lord Averſton is with me; for the compariſon between them riſes in my mind, and my imagination repreſents the great difference between them, whether I will or no. The bell rings for breakfaſt. Adieu. I ſhall take another opportunity of finiſhing this letter.

❁ ❁ ❁ ❁

Wedneſday Morning.

I began this letter yeſterday morning, and had not the ſmalleſt opportunity of ſitting down to finiſh it, till this moment. I have left the houſe buried in ſleep, and am got to my ſtudy, where I will acquaint you with the occurrences of yeſterday.

Mr. Watſon, his wife, daughter and ſon, came to pay a viſit here yeſterday. He is a ſportſman, the ſon another, without any more ideas than thoſe which ariſe from the purſuit of a fox. But they are of Sir Marmaduke's ſide of the queſtion in politics, and are amazing ſtaunch patriots. The lady is rather affected, and would be thought more handſome, more accompliſhed, more ſenſible than ſhe really is; and this ſhe ſupports by a thouſand blunders. Her daughter is the copy of her mother, though I cannot help thinking that there is a kind of jealouſy between them; for ſhe imagines her daughter will ſoon be her rival in polite attainments. However, Mrs. Watſon has one advantage over her, that is not to be equalled, and that is, having ſeen London. Mr. Watſon has a pretty good eſtate, if it was clear; but his father was poſſeſſed with the ſpirit of electioneering, and depending upon his country-intereſt, oppoſed ſome favourite of the Miniſter's, who was ſupplied

plied with money, and by the mere dint of bribery, won the day. This was attended with great expence to Mr. Watſon. The eſtate ſuffered for it, and from that hour there ſeems to be an hereditary hate to all miniſterial meaſures in the family. This was a diſtreſſing circumſtance to Sir Marmaduke, who very well knew that they would not fail of ſhewing their principles upon every opportunity; and as he was very unwilling to diſoblige Lord Averſton, he could not tell how to behave. I believe my uncle was forced to apologize in private for his viſitors to his Lordſhip, who took very little notice of their abſurdities, but preſerved a contemptuous ſuperiority over them. They, on the other hand, could not help looking on a Lord as one of a different way of thinking from them, and was very glad to get rid of him. Not ſo Mrs. Watſon: the thoughts of having a Lord in company with her, ſet her in raptures. All her converſation was directed to

his Lordſhip, ſhe had neither eyes nor ears for any body elſe. The young lady diſtreſſed me prodigiouſly in enquiring after faſhions, which I was very little able to ſatisfy her in, for it would have made me hoarſe to have anſwered every queſtion ſhe aſked, and given her deſcriptions of the various things ſhe enquired after. Lord Averſton appeared highly entertained with our gueſts at dinner, but left them ſoon after; and the gentlemen got ſo great over their bottle, that they were determined to ſtay together that evening, though Mrs. Watſon made a number of apologies about the trouble ſhe occaſioned, pouring forth all that impertinent and uſeleſs ceremonious nonſenſe, which might as well be omitted. Yet I am ſure ſhe was well pleaſed at having an opportunity of gratifying her vanity, in ſpending the evening with Lord Averſton. He propoſed a walk, when ſhe joined us in the afternoon, and left the aſſertors of liberty, as he called them, over the

the bottle, to plan new ſchemes. We drank tea early, for the benefit of enjoying a turn among the woods, and ſet out accordingly. Lord Averſton 'ſquired us, the other gentlemen promiſed to follow. I have heard it repeated, as a ſaying of ſome great man of old—"That he was never "leſs alone than when alone."—And at that moment I was never more alone than in the company of thoſe whom I ſo little regarded, or who engroſſed ſo little of my attention. Will you blame me, if at that moment I indulged my romantic, my fooliſh imagination, in repreſenting to myſelf the happineſs I ſhould enjoy, if the perſon whom I wiſhed for made a party with this company, inſtead of thoſe who were ſo diſagreeable to me. I ſigh'd at the loſs of a pleaſure I never experienced: but my mind deſcribed ſomething more delightful than I ever knew. I will not tell you that I wiſhed for Mr. Benſon, but it was ſomebody very like him. How could I help

I help it? Lord Averſton was whiſpering to me the ſofteſt things he could think of; and my mind, by a ſtrange contradiction, was employed in applying them to another perſon. The evening was cool and refreſhing after an exceſſive hot day, every thing ſeemed revived and recovered from the ſtate of dejection and languor occaſioned by the heat. Lord Averſton not finding me as agreeable to his wiſhes as he would have me, therefore quitted me, and joined Mrs. Watſon and Lady Grigſby. Miſs Watſon took me under the arm. We ſauntered along, talking of I know not what; but walked ſo ſlowly, that the other part of the company was a good diſtance from us. We were then going through a grove, or rather a wood, through which my uncle has cut a pretty viſto. A ruſtling among the underwood, drew my attention to the place from whence the noiſe proceeded. It was a country labourer, as I thought, who might have been reſting there,

there, and whom our paſſing by diſturbed. His hat was ſlouch'd, as thoſe of the peaſants generally are; but he pulled it off to ſalute us as we paſſed by him,—and,—my heart ſunk at the ſight. Oh Fanny, that pretended peaſant was Mr. Benſon! It is utterly impoſſible to make you conceive the perturbation I was in at that moment. I knew not what to do. I confeſs it was pleaſing to me in one ſhape, though it was diſagreeable in another. Pleaſing to think that I had not been deceived in my opinion of him; but the dread of being diſcovered by my vigilant guardians, made his preſence diſagreeable. I could not look at him a ſecond time. But I fear in my confuſion I did more than I ought to have done, for I made a ſign to him with my head to retire. He obeyed it, and inſtantly vaniſhed through the coppice, whoſe thickneſs effectually concealed him from our view. Happily Miſs Watſon did not take notice of him; and I eaſily

eaſily perſuaded her that I was taken ſuddenly ill, to hide the alteration in my countenance. The reſt of the evening was paſſed over in reflecting on what I had ſeen. Neither the noiſe of the 'ſquires elevated with Sir Marmaduke's wine, Lord Averſton's pleaſantry, or the abſurdities of Mrs. Watſon, could divert me, or engage my attention. When the hour of retirement came that releaſed me from ſuch diſagreeable company, it was doubly welcome. Every thing which Mr. Mannerſley told me, came freſh into my mind. He has followed me hither: and his being diſguiſed in the Park, evidently ſhews that it was upon my account. But he will be diſcovered, and I ſhall undergo freſh perſecution from my aunt, who will not believe that I was ignorant of his coming down here. I ſhall be looked upon in a light that would be very diſagreeable to me: perhaps may be expoſed to Lord Averſton's reſentment, if he is found out

in this country. But though Mr. Benſon has reſolution enough to oppoſe his open attacks, yet he may be unprepared againſt his ſecret deſigns. I ſhould be ſorry to think any accident happened to him in conſequence of his journey to this place. But what am I to conjecture of the facility with which he aſſumes theſe diſguiſes? Does it not ſhew, Fanny, that he has been accuſtomed to them? Alas I fear every thing. Yet perhaps he concluded that if he had appeared as himſelf, I might be again carried away from him, where he might not ſo eaſily find me. Where can he reſide in this country? I know no place fit to receive him: and if he acts as he is entitled to do from his dreſs and demeanour, he will ſoon be found out here, for this is the favourite habitation of Fame: he cannot be long here undiſcovered. I have reviewed the beginning of this letter, and am aſhamed of myſelf. How will my ſweet friend look upon me when ſhe finds me

me ſo inconſiſtent! How much are my heart and tongue at variance! I confeſs, Fanny, nay my actions muſt confeſs me the ſlave to a deluſion that I cannot break through. Did I ever imagine I could want reſolution enough to preſcribe rules for my conduct, and to follow them afterwards? Yet ſo it is—Alas! I can no more boaſt an innocence of heart, when I am ſenſible my deeds contradict my words. But is it to be guilty to feel the approaches of—let me not name it, I would not ſay love if I could help it, but my conſcience upbraids me for diſguiſing my ſentiments from myſelf. I aſſure you my ſituation is very diſagreeable: whenever it is altered it muſt be for the better. Farewell my dear friend.

Your's truly,

MATILDA CONYERS.

LETTER LX.

TO ROBERT ASGILL, Eſq.

YES, Sir, Lord Averſton has impoſed upon me. I am the dupe of his artifice, and find what I have heard of him to be too true. That man is doubly to be feared, who conceals a bad action by the violation of truth, it is encreaſing the crime: while the bold villain, who avows his miſdeeds, cannot be charged with hypocriſy. It grives me, it angers me to think I ſhould be ſo impoſed on, to give him an opportunity of laughing at me, deriding my folly, and milkineſs of diſpoſition, that ſo eaſily could be led aſtray by ſuch miſrepreſentations: but if his is the triumph, his is alſo the guilt: nor ſhall either paſs unreſented by me when an opportunity offers. You will be ſurpriſed to ſee this written from the country, and from the

the neighbourhood of Miſs Conyers. I have been undeceived at laſt. Mr. Mannerſley awaked me from the dream of deſpondence and doubts, to be certain of misfortune and ſhame. Misfortune that I ſo long was kept in the dark with regard to Lord Averſton's machinations, and thereby giving them an advantage over me; and ſhame, to think I am ſo liable to be deceived by ſuch ſhallow pretences. When I learned for a truth that Sir Marmaduke's family was retired from town, and with them all hopes gone, I abandoned myſelf to deſpair. Till that moment I knew not the exceſs of my paſſion, nor could form an idea of its power, or what it might induce me to do. I was miſerable in the deprivation of her whom my ſoul adored. I knew not where to find her: and even if I had known, after what his Lordſhip had told me, there was a doubt whether ever I ſhould ſucceed. Whilſt I remained in a ſtate of uncertainty

ty with regard to my future conduct, and totally regardleſs of myſelf, Mr. Mannerſley came to viſit me; the great alteration he perceived in my air and countenance, let him into the ſecret of my heart.

"What is Miſs Conyers gone, and you "not know where to find her?"

"Alas! Mannerſley, it is too true."

"Ah, I knew nothing of her being out "of town till this morning, when I called "at Sir Marmaduke's houſe, and found "they were flown: and what ſurpriſed me "more than all the reſt was, that the fel-"low would not tell me where they were "gone to. But calling at the coffee-houſe, "I got a letter from my ſteward that un-"ravelled the whole myſtery."

"Then you know where they are," ſaid I, interrupting him with great eagerneſs. "Tell me, I beſeech you."

"That is a ſecret not to be revealed till "a proper time. But I muſt firſt tell you "what happened when I ſaw her laſt."

This

This was only a converſation between them which he repeated concerning Lord Averſton, whom her uncle ſaid ſhe was going to marry, and which I ſuppoſe his Lordſhip might have prevailed upon him to ſay. But what offended and vexed me was, his having mentioned to Matilda, that I loved her. Oh, my friend, it was anticipating my wiſhes. She ſhould have heard from my own mouth the declaration of the trueſt paſſion that ever inſpired human breaſt. She ſhould have liſtened to the effuſions of an enamoured heart devoted to her. It was hurting my delicacy; but he meant to ſerve me, and I could not blame him for his good intentions. Perhaps ſhe may be diſpleaſed that I uſe her name with ſuch familiarity, or preſume to talk of her. Perhaps ſhe may not be averſe to being acquainted with my love, and the knowledge of it may ſmooth my way to her. What a ſtate of miſery is mine! every thing is to be hoped for, I fear every thing.

" You

"You may ſuppoſe," ſaid Mannerſley, "I intended to break the ice for you, and "ſhould have done you ſome effectual ſer-"vice if Lady Grigſby had not interrupted "us. I have now told you, and have al-"ready declared that I have given up all "thoughts of Miſs Conyers; but I don't "ſee why you may not try your fortune "with her. If you will promiſe to be ru-"led by me, I will put you in a way of "doing it; but remember you muſt be en-"tirely governed by me."

I aſſured him I would.

"Well then," continued he, "prepare "to leave town as ſoon as you will, and "come down into the country with me, "and ſpend as many months as you pleaſe "at my houſe. I am a neighbour of Sir "Marmaduke's; and I know that Miſs "Conyers is now at Greenhill Park, and "Lord Averſton along with her."

"Lord Averſton along with her! you "miſtake ſurely: he cannot be with her: "the

"the information you have received is "falſe."

"I fancy," replied he, "I can depend "upon that: but what reaſon have you "to imagine he is not there?"

In juſtification of my own opinion I told him every thing I have before acquainted you with.

"Then he has fairly flung you: but you "may depend upon it he is now at Green-"hill Park along with Sir Marma-"duke and Miſs Conyers; but he has "overſhot himſelf, and I will give you "an opportunity of being even with him "if you deſire it. I will put you in a way "of ſeeing Miſs Conyers, and throwing "his Lordſhip out."

I liſtened to his propoſal, and embraced it with pleaſure. We ſet out for his ſeat the next day. During our journey he apologized for not having informed me of the converſation he had with Miſs Conyers before that time; but that very day he was obliged

obliged to viſit a relation of his who was extremely ill, and in a dangerous way, ſome miles from town, and that he had not returned till the evening before the day in which he ſpoke to me. We alſo ſettled a plan for our conduct in the country, where, if it was known he had brought me, it was very likely that Miſs Conyers would be removed again, when I might not have ſuch an opportunity of ſeeing or engaging her in converſation. I therefore paſs by the name of Smith, and am ſuppoſed to be diſordered in my ſenſes. I am put in poſſeſſion of a ſmall lodge at the end of a garden, which contains two bedchambers, a ſmall parlour, and a few books. Here Mannerſley ſpends as much time as he can, and the ſervants of the houſe are ſo thoroughly poſſeſſed with the notion of my madneſs, that none will come near the place. To relieve my ſolitude as much as in his power, he has introduced me to a Mr. O'Reiley, a gentleman, who has been

an officer in ſome of the foreign ſervices, but who poſſeſſes none of the characteriſtic gaiety of foreigners. He is a man who has improved his knowledge by the opportunity he has had of ſeeing men and things, and has a large ſtock of good ſenſe and natural politeneſs. He is a very profitable companion, and can be pleaſing when he ſhakes off a reſerve and melancholy that hangs upon him, and renders him almoſt inſenſible to external objects. He has reſided in this part of the country for above two years, and has formed no other connexions than with Mr. Mannerſley, who ſaw him unacquainted with any body, and forced him to viſit him. He tells me he has preſerved an extraordinary character in the country for his good qualities, but that he delights in ſolitude. With my conſent he was made acquainted with my reaſons for viſiting this place and lying concealed. When he heard it was a matter of love, he ſhook his head, and uttered a very

very ſignificant ſigh. This perſuaded me he had felt the ſad effects of the fatal paſſion. Mr. Mannerſley hinted to me that he was extremely reſerved, and though he has known him ſo long, and has a very great regard for him, he never could get the leaſt intimation of the cauſe of his melancholy; but he ſaid he imagined I ſhould be able to find it out. It was extremely agreeable to me to have a man of his knowledge and experience for a companion. I engaged him in deſcriptions of the cuſtoms and manners of the different countries he reſided in; and whilſt I thus inform myſelf of what I wiſh more eſpecially to know, I divert his attention from the diſagreeable ſubjects he is accuſtomed to think on. He was pleaſed with my ſociety, and is very frequently with me, the aſſociate of my walks, and the confidant of my paſſion. Mannerſley pitched upon him to accompany me, for he would not be taken

notice of, which would be the caſe, if he himſelf went with me to Greenhill-park, which is Sir Marmaduke Grigſby's ſeat. However, from his being frequently there, he deſcribed the place ſo perfectly that I cou'd not fail of being right, and placing myſelf in ſuch a ſituation as might enable me to ſee Miſs Conyers in her evening walks, or in her way to a favourite little ſtudy ſhe has in the park. As no diſguiſe was ſo ſecure as that of one of the country people, I aſſumed it: I had my leathern jerkin, and every other part of the dreſs to match it. For four evenings I watched in the neighbourhood of Sir Marmaduke's park, and had the happineſs of ſeeing Matilda, though at a diſtance. But will you believe me, when I aſſure you that Lord Averſton was in her company! I was afraid that even this diſguiſe would not conceal me from his penetrating and ſuſpicious eye; and I would not for the world

world that he had diſcovered me making an attempt to ſee and converſe with Matilda, in which I muſt neceſſarily have failed, if he had known me. Without Miſs Conyers knowing that I was in the country, it was to no purpoſe being here. I put myſelf in the way, and at laſt ſucceeded. She was in company with a young Lady; Lord Averſton, Lady Grigſby, and another Lady were at ſome diſtance before them. Then was my opportunity. I made a rutling in the buſhes, and appeared as if going acroſs their path about my buſineſs. The ſight of the ladies occaſioned me to pull off my hat. The lovely maid ſaw and knew me. Her countenance expreſſed ſurpriſe and wonder; but I could read nothing of anger, or reſentment in it. She changed colour; and turning her head away gently made a ſign to me with her hand to depart. I obeyed it inſtantly, and ſoon loſt ſight of her in the wood. O'Reily, who waited for me perceived an alteration

in me, and propheſied that I had met with what had pleaſed me. I confeſſed that I was happy beyond compare, in ſeeing her whom my ſoul loved: and finding her, as I had a right to conjecture, at leaſt not diſpleaſed with my appearance. I indulged imaginations which, till that moment, I had not courage enough to form. My good-natured companion rejoiced at my pleaſure, and we turned to my lodge in a more elevated ſtate of mind than we quitted it. Adieu.

GEORGE BENSON.

LETTER LXI.

To the ſame.

MANNERSLEY, who profeſſes and I believe has a ſincere friendſhip for me, was exceedingly pleaſed at the account I gave him of the reception I had

had met with; for even her not appearing diſpleaſed, was an indication, that the ſight of me was not diſagreeable.

"But, ſaid Mr. Mannerſley, the view "of her alone is not ſufficient: you muſt "contrive to ſpeak to her, to tell her the "intereſt of your heart. Fear not man: "if ſhe does not frown now, ſhe will "ſmile by and by. I will ſhew you a "method of getting to the back of the "little ſtudy, to which ſhe goes almoſt "every morning before the family ſtirs, "for ſhe is a very early riſer: Here you "may be able to engage her in conver-"ſation, and learn her ſentiments of "you."

I determined to follow his advice, and would have put it in execution the next morning, but it was wet, and I judged that I ſhould have no chance of ſeeing her. But the dawn of the following day conducted my ſteps to the habitation of the charming Matilda: more blooming,

more fragrant, than the thouſand bloſſoms which then expanded their ſhining boſoms, yet humid with the balmy dew, to the eye of day, came ſhe forth, the loveliеſt, the moſt aimable amongſt the works of nature: She paſſed me; I ſaw her enter her little retreat, and ſoon after got to a back-window, that preſerved me from all other notice, but hers, for whom I had thus demeaned and diſguiſed myſelf. But how I ſhould make her obſerve me, or draw her attention to the ſpot where I was, made me heſitate for ſome time. How timid is love! In the moment when it pants for the enjoyment of its wiſhes; the fear of offending, and unaccountable diffidence, damps its ardor, and daſhes the cup of pleaſure with doubt and uncertainty. Thus was I, ſo near the woman whom my heart adored, alone, eager to ſpeak to her, enjoying the moſt favourable, and perhaps the only opportunity

I might ever have of communicating my ſentiments to her, which I had long wiſhed for; yet at that moment was I incapable of taking any ſtep to forward my ſuit. Fortune at that inſtant took my part. A thruſh, perched on a buſh near where I ſtood, with grateful lays hailed the return of day. The ſweetneſs and variety of its notes ſtruck Miſs Conyers, and ſhe threw up the window, either to ſee from whence the ſound proceeded, or to be more at liberty to hear the ſweet notes diſtinctly: I ſaw her, and approached the window—She perceived me, and ſtarted back.

"Alas!" ſaid I to myſelf, "I had rea-
"ſon to fear; if ſhe cannot bear the
"ſight of me."

She did not leave me to indulge theſe melancholy reflections long, but returned again and leaned out of the window. I bowed as I drew near her, but could

not find words to addreſs her in. She ſpied my confuſion.

"It would argue great weakneſs in me "Mr. Benſon, to pretend not to know you. "I cannot ſo ſoon forget the civilities "you have ſhewn me. But it makes me "very unhappy and uneaſy, to ſee you "here in this diſguiſe: while I am at a "loſs to account for this conduct, and "you ſeem to deſire to ſpeak to me, as "I may conjecture by your following "me here. I ſhould be glad to know "what is the cauſe of your appearing in "this manner, and why you have ven-"tured here."

"My wiſhes are all fulfilled Madam, "by your giving me this opportunity of "explaining myſelf. Tis true that I de-"ſire to ſpeak with you, that alone has "brought me here, for where you were "not, I could not live. I only came to "aſk one queſtion: anſwer that only, "adorable Matilda, and I will ceaſe to

"render

" render you unhappy or uneaſy by my
" preſence. To be reſolved in that I left
" London, and have thus approached
" you, ſorry that I am obliged to aſſume
" this dreſs in your ſight, but through
" this diſguiſe only could I have obtained
" the happineſs I now enjoy."

I pauſed! " However extraordinary
" your deſire, of having any doubt you
" may entertain reſolved by me, may
" be; yet I ſhould be unwilling to re-
" fuſe you any thing which might con-
" tribute to your ſatisfaction. If it is
" ſuch a queſtion as I can with propri-
" ety anſwer, you may depend on my be-
" ing ingenuous with you."

" Let me nor be held preſumptuous in
" your ſight, nor let my good and ho-
" neſt intentions ſuffer from miſrepreſen-
" tation. The happineſs or miſery of my
" life muſt be determined by the anſwer
" I ſhall receive: and let your forgive-
" neſs be the companion of your words.

" have you choſen Lord Averſton from
" the reſt of mankind to be honoured
" with your hand? or, do you ſuffer from
" your guardian's averſion to this union,
" who prevents your being happy with
" the man whom your heart approves?"

" Really Sir," replied ſhe, after ſome heſitation, " this demand of yours is ſo
" very extraordinary, that I cannot at once
" form a proper reply to it. I know not for
" what reaſon, or from what cauſe you
" may have aſſigned to yourſelf, whether
" from my behaviour which you may
" have miſunderſtood, or what ever elſe, your
" have aſſumed a right to aſk this queſtion.
" I have ever conſidered you as a gen-
" tleman; and yet this manner of pro-
" ceeding contradicts the good opinion I
" had formed of you. Let me know, Sir,
" why you would be reſolved in this
" queſtion?"

" Oh heavy hour! Inſupportable woe!
To meet thy anger, Lady, is miſery
" it-

"itſelf; but to appear to have deſerved
"it, is ſtill more dreadful. Yet let me
"beſeech you not to think that wanton
"preſumption is the cauſe of this raſh-
"neſs, or that, from illiberal conſtruc-
"tions of your behaviour, I have thus
"ventured to ſeem a buſy and impertі-
"nent meddler—other cauſes, other views
"induced me to tempt my fate: but let
"them, near as they are to me, be buried
"in ſilence, till I ſhall obtain the ſatis-
"faction I require. It is not mere cu-
"rioſity madam, it is not the vain and
"idle deſire of knowing your ſentiments.
"Lord Averſton has already made me
"his confidant in this matter: he has
"informed me that your paſſion was mu-
"tual, and that nothing but the ſeverity
"and hatred of your guardian to him
"on account of political principles pre-
"vented your union: he intereſted me
"in his behalf, and required my aſſiſtance
"to find you out on your ſudden retreat.

"Ano-

"Another perſon has told me that he "has deceived me. I have no right to "refuſe credit to Lord Averſton, till "your words ſhall determine me, whether "or no I have been led into an error, "and point out to me what I ſhall for "the future believe."

I ſtopped, and ſhe returned me no anſwer.

"You may believe what I have aſſerted "Madam, though it may appear incre-"dible; but be aſſured that I ſcorn the "meanneſs of a falſhood—I confeſs alſo, "that it is more than the mere deſire of "knowing whether Lord Averſton im-"poſed on me or not, which induced me "to come into this country—But let me "not offend you further than I have "done, the ſmalleſt fault is ſooneſt atoned "for. Therefore let me once more en-"treat you to reſolve my doubts."

"The manner of your addreſſing me, "and the queſtion you aſked me, occa-

"ſioned

" ſioned ſurpriſe. But the account you
" have given me, Sir, of Lord Averſton's
" converſation with you, has awakened
" more diſagreeable ſenſations. I will pay
" that credit to your veracity which it
" deſerves; and aſſure you, that I believe
" the ſtory which you have related to me
" now Sir, though I know not, nor de-
" ſire to know what private reaſons you
" may have for enquiring ſo particular-
" ly into the ſtate of my connections
" with Lord Averſton, truth obliges me
" to acquaint you, in direct contradiction
" to what his Lordſhip has advanced,
" that I have by no means conſented to
" an union with him, nor has the hatred
" which my guardian conceived for him
" been the cauſe of our not being united:
" on the contrary, Sir, both Sir Marma-
" duke and Lady Grigſby are his ſtaunch
" friends, and his moſt zealous advocates,
" continually importuning me to receive
" him as an huſband; but my conſtant
" refuſal

" refuſal muſt inform you, that I do not
" approve of him. I hope this will ſa-
" tisfy you, Sir."

As ſhe concluded, ſhe roſe from her ſeat, and was leaving the window.

" Yet longer, but a little longer let
" me treſpaſs on your patience, gentle
" Lady. Let me, before you depart, return
" you thanks for your condeſcenſion; let
" me acknowledge my gratitude for your
" goodneſs, and aſſure you I have an heart
" thoroughly ſenſible of the favour you
" have now conferred on me. That heart,
" which is full of your beloved idea,
" may have now leave to form hopes; nor
" will it again ſuffer from the extremi-
" ty of deſpair. Nay, if you ſhould not
" frown, it may be bleſſed."

" Had I thought, Mr. Benſon, that my
" giving you the ſatisfaction you deſired
" relative to Lord Averſton, would have
" occaſioned this converſation, aſſure your-
" ſelf I had not done it. Prudence and
" diſcretion

" diſcretion oblige me to avoid liſtening
" to you, upon a ſubject that I cannot
" hear without accuſing myſelf of acting
" wrongly."

" Stay, yet ſtay," exclaimed I, as ſhe again offered to retire; " for pity ſtay.
" Oh, if it be a crime to love, and love
" without hope, I am guilty. If it is guilt
" to be miſerable, on me let puniſhment
" await. Hear me only this once, and
" let me die; for I wiſh not to live under
" your diſpleaſure. From the hour I
" firſt ſaw I loved you. From that hour,
" your charming image has taken poſſeſ-
" ſion of my ſoul: in thinking of you
" only was I happy. It is impoſſible
" to deſcribe my wretched ſituation, when
" I learned from Lord Averſton your a-
" brupt departure from town, and what
" was yet worſe to me, to hear from his
" mouth that you were his by the ſoft
" ties of inclination, and I could not
" think he would deceive me. How I was
" informed

" informed of the place of your retreat, " if you will permit me, I will acquaint " you? Tedious is the tale, and wretched " the caſe of him who lives without " peace, who loves without expectation " of return." Will you permit me," continued I, finding ſhe made no return, " to relate it to you."

" Not now, Sir, the day grows upon us; " and if you ſhould be ſeen here—"

" Am I ſuch a bugbear? Lady Grigſ- " by was once my friend. I will throw " off this diſguiſe, and viſit you as my- " ſelf."

" Not for the world! but pray retire: " your being obſerved would occaſion me " much trouble."

" I had rather periſh—but will you " not permit me to converſe with you, to " behold you at all? Will you let me " ſee you even here again?"

" Oh, Sir, you diſtreſs me beyond " meaſure: the family will be up ſoon,

" and

"and ſome of them may come here to "ſeek me—Pray retire."

"I will: but be ſo indulgent to meet "me here to morrow morning."

She ſhook her hand, and ſhut the window. I quickly got out of Sir Marmaduke's demeſnes and purſued my road to Mannerſley's, very well ſatisfied with the interview I had this morning. Oh Aſgill ſhe is every thing that the moſt extravagant fancy could form an idea of, or that my moſt ſanguine wiſhes could picture out! Good heaven, can I have a conception of the happineſs I ſhould enjoy were ſhe mine! No: it exceeds even imagination. You will ſee women in the world whoſe good qualities make them eſtimable, and whoſe underſtandings cultivated and improved inſpire you with reſpect for them: ſuch you may entertain a platonic friendſhip for, becauſe they excite no tender paſſions. There are others whoſe perſonal qualifications may render them

them mere objects of desire, without any other sentiments: of such you may make mistresses for your looser hours. Yet either of these is not fit for a wife, where both respect and love should unite. Matilda is happily compounded of both. Her beauties awake desire in its most retired cells, and her charms inflame the heart. But her sense, her commanding purity, awes the libertine; and beauty never appears so amiable as when it is the companion of virtue—How lovely then is Matilda, who unites in herself

The beautiful mistress and sensible friend.

Pray for my success, and you shall see how blessed we shall be together.

Yours,

GEORGE BENSON.

LETTER

LETTER LXII.

To the ſame.

THE impreſſion Matilda made on me, in the conference I held with her, almoſt effaced the remembrance of the wrongs I had ſuffered from the miſrepreſentations of Lord Averſton. There was ſome meaning in the ſignificant diſtinction ſhe made in *my* being ſeen there. This was the ſecondary thought I conceived: for the charming maid engroſſed the firſt. No doubt but he has ſlandered me, as well to Matilda, as to Lady Grigſby. Yet wherein could he have an opportunity? He is totally unacquainted with my private life: if that could have afforded him room for treating me ill, he muſt have ſpoken without book; nor could he deduce proofs for what he might have aſperſed me with. 'Tis true, that thoſe hours of diſſipation, which the

the heat of youth, and the temptation of the age led me into, may be objected to me: yet in that time, which now creates ſhame and remorſe, I did not diſhonour myſelf by any mean or baſe action. Wherein then am I ſo very reprehenſible? I ſee my error, and turn from it. I repent of my follies, and abhor my conduct. Is there more required of me? Or muſt the tranſgreſſions of a few hours affix a ſtain of infamy on my future life? Perhaps, were Lord Averſton's more ſecret conduct enquired into, he might ſtill be found leſs blameleſs than me. I mean not to recriminate: but he that is without crime ſhould caſt the firſt ſtone. To recover from the diſeaſe of folly, is a renewal of ſtrength. To know a weakneſs, is to guard againſt it. Then, if that is the only thing that can be objected againſt me, I truſt I may be able to clear that. What particular cauſe Matilda had to wiſh me to be unobſerved by the people of the houſe, I could not tell;

or why ſhe would not have me appear there as myſelf. "Not for the world!"—theſe were her words. Then I will endeavour, ſaid I to myſelf, to perſuade her to tell me if ſhe knows any thing that has been ſaid of me: that ſhall be the ſubject of to-morrow's converſation with her. I communicated my ſuſpicions to Mannerſley, and he confirmed them as far as he knew; but aſſured me that he had no doubt but Matilda could give me more ſubſtantial information. Theſe thoughts prevented repoſe. My mind was entirely occupied in the reflection of the injury I might receive from his malicious aſperſions, and the prejudice which Matilda might, in conſequence of them, conceive againſt me. That was the moſt tormenting of all the ill effects that could ariſe from them. Doubts, reſentment and vexation kept me ſleepleſs all night: and with the dawn of the day I preſented myſelf at the window, where I hoped to ſee the adorable Matilda.

tilda. I was there an hour before ſhe appeared. She came to the window, and ſeeing me waiting, retired back as if in doubt whether ſhe ſhould open it or no. However, ſhe ſoon returned again. How lovely was ſhe! oh my friend. The bluſh that was ſpread over her countenance heightened her charms. Her eyes ſparkled with unuſual vivacity; but there was a confuſion and modeſty in her actions and looks, which made her beauty and ſenſibility ſtill more conſpicuous. As the judicious painter contraſts the more ſtriking and animated parts of his piece with a deep ſhade, to render them more noticed, and to encreaſe their beauty; ſo did the timid reſerve, the baſhful confuſion of the ever-lovely Matilda, augment the charms they for a moment concealed; but with a veil ſo tranſparent, that was eaſily ſeen through. The diamond, encircled with black, ſeems to borrow its luſtre from that which ſurrounds

rounds it, though in reality the brightneſs is native and innate.

"May every morning riſe to you, crown'd "with pleaſure; may every night attend "you to your couch in peace; may you "never know misfortune, and may my "beſt wiſhes for you be the leaſt of your "happineſs."

"I thank you, Sir, for thoſe wiſhes."

"They proceed from an heart ſincere "and honeſt: let me boaſt of that, having "nothing elſe to pride myſelf upon. I "would that you ſhould eſteem it ſo; and "then you would credit me, when I aſſure "you, that to merit and poſſeſs your good "opinion, would be the happineſs and "honour of my life; whilſt nothing can "equal my miſery if you ſhould think "otherwiſe."

"From what reaſons ſhould you ſuſpect "I did? Will the conſciouſneſs of any "ſecret guilt, or bad deſigns, accuſe your-"ſelf, and make you imagine I could pe-

" netrate into your boſom, and view your
" thoughts and intentions as they really
" are? If you think ſo, you may have
" cauſe to fear my bad opinion."

" No, madam, my heart is entirely in-
" nocent of any ſuch ſelf-accuſation; nor
" can I upbraid myſelf for having enter-
" tained the leaſt diſhonourable thought or
" intention. I can openly and honeſtly
" avow my paſſion for you, as pure as
" ever an heart burn'd with. I cannot avoid
" admiring you: and who can ſee without
" loving! That love would be hopeleſs,
" remedileſs, if you ſhould think me un-
" worthy a return, and I be fated to a
" life of never-ending woe. But I fear
" from what dropped from you yeſterday,
" that ſomething has been ſaid to my
" prejudice; that you have had bad no-
" tions of me inſtilled into your mind; and
" that whatever ſuit I might make to you
" is thereby anticipated, and I cut off from
" my deareſt hopes. Render me then that

"juſtice, Lady, to inform me if ſuch "things have been ſaid of me, that I may "at once clear myſelf to you, and be "avenged of thoſe who ſo injuriouſly "wrong me."

"That deſire of revenge may perhaps "ariſe from rage at detected guilt."

"Sure I am that I muſt have been "ſtrangely miſrepreſented to you, ere your "gentle breaſt could have harboured ſuch "a thought of me, or your tongue have "given it utterance. Yes, adorable Ma-"tilda, you have been taught to think of "me as I am not: and how ſhall I be able "to remove the bad impreſſion, till I "know of what I am accuſed. Have that "regard to juſtice, have that concern for "innocence, which will make you dear to "yourſelf, and worſhipped by me; and "let me know wherein I am accuſed."

"I know not, Mr. Benſon, in what "light I may be eſteemed by you, who "thus meet you in private, unknown to

"my guardians; or what opinion you can "entertain of me who thus make affigna- "tions with you. I have had the honour "of knowing you but a very ſhort time, "and may be liable to more evil con- "ſtructions than you have been, and per- "haps by you too."

"Then," replied I, interrupting her, "my fate is pronounced. When you can "imagine me ſo baſe, ſo loſt to every ſen- "timent of honour, to every manly feel- "ing, you muſt deſpiſe me; nor where "ſo contemptible an opinion reſides, can "love ever harbour. Oh, Matilda! thoſe "who have abuſed me, want the courage "to tell me to my face their ſlanders; and "the accuſation that wants teſtimony to "ſupport it, ſhould not find credit with "you. But though I may bid adieu to "receiving your good opinion, I beſeech "you let me know who has traduced me."

"Your haſte and impatience prevents "my deſire of ſatisfying you. I could

"wiſh

"wiſh to find, for your own ſake, that you "have been miſrepreſented. I hope you "have, for I would not think badly of "you. All I ſhall require of you is to "anſwer me directly, whether you are re-"ally what you ſeem to be?"

"Oh, Matilda, whence aroſe that inſinu-"ation? What foe to my happineſs has "inſpired you with a notion that I wiſh to "deceive you? As I hope to find favour "in thy ſight, as I wiſh to convince you "of the honour and ſincerity of my paſ-"ſion, and deſire to merit a return, I am "no worſe than I ſeem to be. It may not "be accounted boaſting to ſay, that I am "not leſs than a gentleman: and truſt I do "not diſgrace my family, in ſome of whoſe "veins blood not inferior to nobility "flows. But my fortune is impaired by "the follies of my anceſtors, and my eſtate "neither equal to my wiſhes or deſires: "for were it as large as avarice could covet, "it would be too ſmall to offer to your

"acceptance. With regard to myſelf, treat "me as you ſhall find me. When I ſhall "derogate from the character of a man of "honour, of fidelity and truth, baniſh me "for ever from thy ſight, which to me is "the moſt exalted happineſs I can at pre-"ſent enjoy. If I fail to convince you of "the truth of my aſſertion, when put to "the proof, uſe me as I deſerve; let me be "held a villain, and let me meet the fate I "merit."

"It may be too late then, but I will not "doubt you."

"If you have been told that I am not "worthy of you, you have not been miſin-"formed. For where is the man that can "pretend to you on the ground of his own "deſervings? But I will endeavour to "make myſelf as deſerving of you as I can, "and you yourſelf ſhall confeſs that I will "exceed my competitors; for there is no-"thing I will not undertake that is not im-"poſſible, or attended with ceaſing to "adore you."

"I would

"I would not wiſh to treat you with "leſs ingenuity than you deſerve, Mr. "Benſon, and am obliged to you for think- "ing ſo well of me: but ſhould you be "noticed here it would injure my fame, "which has hitherto been unſpotted. I "am ſurrounded by ſpies: every body here "is Lord Averſton's friend. Should you "be diſcovered, it would be immediately "reported that you came down here by "my invitation, that I am carrying on an "intrigue with a ſtranger; this diſguiſe "that you have aſſumed would be an ar- "gument againſt you, and I ſhould be "the ſport of all the cenſorious and mali- "cious tongues in the world. Oh I dread "to think on it! Beſides, your being "here—"

She pauſed. Her laſt words alarmed me.

"Proceed charming maid. Why do "you heſitate? Whatever it is that may "be ſaid of me, however dreadful, will loſe

"its force in coming from your mouth.
"Why am I made the great objection,
"or what have I done to be ſo obnoxious?"

"I know not," replied ſhe, but "I muſt tell you, to explain my "own words, that it was entirely upon "your account I was hurried from Lon-"don, upon your account I am made "a priſoner here and forced to receive "the addreſſes of Lord Averſton."

"Good heaven—upon my account!

"Yes;" ſaid ſhe, interrupting me, "and "ſhould you be ſeen here I know not "where I might be be taken to, or what "worſe ſituation I might be placed in. Lord "Averſton who fails not to perſecute me, "would alſo be ſure to ſpread abroad "reports to my prejudice."

"He dare not, for his life he dare not "—There is chaſtiſement awaits him; "and his adding ſuch an ungenerous ac-"tion to his former miſdeeds, would on-"ly fill up the meaſure of his crimes

"and

"and bring down puniſhment on him
"with a more ſpeedy hand."

"Such a ſtep would overwhelm me
"with miſery—Oh, Sir, you could not
"oppoſe his intereſt, however juſt your
"cauſe was—let me ſuffer—"

"Oh, Matilda, conſider that your ſuf-
"ferings, and upon my account, are death
"to me. Can you ſuppoſe that I can
"reflect upon the injuſtice done to either
"of us with patience? Though great is
"the injury my character has ſuſtained,
"I could forgive him that, if you were
"not wronged alſo. What is his inte-
"reſt? what is his power? that injured
"innocence, and inſulted honour ſhall not
"oppoſe and conquer?"

"Drop thoſe thoughts Mr. Benſon, if
"you really poſſeſs thoſe ſentiments for
"me which you profeſs to do. You
"muſt conſider that I ſhall be a ſufferer in
"whatever diſpute you may have with
"Lord Averſton, let it be upon what

"account it may, and whatever is the
"conſequence of it. Then have I not
"reaſon to intreat you to avoid this place,
"where, if you are known, the diſcovery
"will be pregnant with miſchief to us
"both."

"Ah Matilda, what do you ſay? for-
"bid me your ſight, by which I live, de-
"prive me of your converſation, which
"is my only pleaſure! I muſt ſee you,
"let what will be the conſequence. I
"muſt tell you that I ſhall never ceaſe
"adoring you, though deſtruction ſhould
"await me. Lord Averſton ſhall never
"prevent me—I'll defy him—I'll pro-
"voke him to meet my juſt reſentment,
"and will remove the obſtruction to ob-
"taining my wiſhes. I live all day a re-
"cluſe: my only hope to compenſate
"my ills, and the pains of abſence, is
"the ſight of her I love! to be deprived
"of that will drive me to deſpair. Oh
"gentle maid, do not forbid me to

"pay

"pay my morning vows to you with "the ſame ſincerity I offer them to "heaven, for that is a witneſs to the "purity and ardor of my paſſion."

"I know not what to do—I ſhall be "obſerved if I come thus conſtantly "here ſo early—I fear every thing, "though I know not what cauſe I have "to be fearful. If you come the day af-"ter tomorrow, you ſhall meet me here. "Farewell."

"It will be a tedious age till then. "Farewell lovely Matilda."

"Do not ſtay here, for the day is con-"ſiderably advanced."

"I cannot depart from the ſpot where "I have been ſo bleſſed. Once more "adieu."

Aſgill, ſhe is an angel! The name of Miſs Conyers is held in reverence here. The ample fortune ſhe enjoys is only the means ſhe has of making others happy. The poor people about her habitation

bleſs her as ſhe paſſes by them. The young rejoice in her preſence, and the firſt ſounds that their infants are taught to liſp, is her name. With equal prudence and munificence ſhe has erected a kind of manufactory, where thoſe who had no employment before find ſomething to do, and every one is enabled to procure their own ſuſtenance. This is calculated chiefly for women and children, and thoſe whoſe age render them incapable of other work. Induſtry goes before, Plenty and Content are her hand-maids. To particularize all the good ſhe has done and daily does, would make a long hiſtory: theſe are her virgin amuſements, theſe are the purſuits of her younger days. How glorious would her matron employments be, *to hear the tender thought, to teach the young idea how to ſhoot*; to be at once the precept and example to her family of every thing that was good, every thing that was virtuous. Happy,

thrice

thrice happy will be the man whom ſhe bleſſes with her hand; for every joy that the marriage ſtate can experience, ſhe can beſtow. I found O Reilly waiting for me at home. I had not ſeen him the preceding day, for he had been indiſpoſed. The anger I had conceived againſt Lord Averſton had ſo far diſcompoſed me, that he could eaſily perceive ſomething had diſpleaſed me. When he had ſatisfied me of the cauſe of his abſence, he could not forbear aſking what had happened to vex me.

"I ſee by your countenance that you "are not in a good humour, and tell "me now what has happened to diſturb "you?"

I could not refuſe to ſatisfy him.

"By my own ſoul Mr. Benſon," re- "plied he, "that ſame Lord is a great "piece of a rogue, and I don't mind a "Lord three farthings, when he is not "an honeſt man. Oh hone, a Lord's

"nobody

"nobody in this country, and a beating "would do him a great deal of good. "Challenge him honey, and Ill carry it, "and if he is ſaucy I'll fight him af- "terwards, for I have a great regard for "your father's ſon, and would not mat- "ter doing him a good turn for your "ſake."

I told him I was infinitely obliged to him, and whenever I was forced to proceed to ſuch extremities, there was no one I would ſooner call upon, or have a greater dependance on than him; but that it was not prudent at preſent, eſpecially as a Lady was in queſtion who might ſuffer by a conteſt of that kind, but that if I found he preſumed upon my forbearance, and ſtill continued to vilify me, that I would undoubtedly aſſert my own innocence, and puniſh him as he deſerved if I was able.

"There is nothing like it, honey; "it would be of the greateſt ſervice imaginable

"ginable to him—but the Lady would
"like you the better—by my ſoul I
"was forced to fight myſelf once, not
"that I like it, but when a man's o-
"bliged to it, you know he can't help
"it. My gentleman never came near me
"again, or he ſhould have more on't.
"But the Lady was the happieſt crea-
"ture in the world, and fonder of me
"than ever. But ſhe did not uſe me
"ſo well afterwards; ſo I would not have
"you to be too ſure of her: for may
"be ſhe is making game of you all this
"while—But that thief of a Lord, I
"would be after tickling him if I was
"like you."

"Your advice may be very good, my dear
"O Reilly, but it is not at preſent conveni-
"ent. When it is proper, I hope I ſhall not
"want reſolution to behave as I ought."

"By my ſoul if you did, you ſhould
"go by yourſelf for O Reilly."

This

This worthy Iriſhman, brave, honeſt, and zealous for his friend, would as ſoon quarrel with Lord Averſton upon my account as look at him. But it is not for him to avenge my wrongs, nor is it proper to take his advice at preſent. I muſt therefore aſk your opinion, tell me what I ſhould do. Though I have no poſitive proof, yet I am ſure that no one but his Lordſhip could have any intereſt in depreciating me in the Grigſby family. But I would avoid the imputation of raſhneſs as much as I would that of being too tame. Though I wiſh not to incur the character of one that is quarrelſome, or a bravo; yet with Hamlett I could

—Find quarrel in a ſtraw
When honour's at the ſtake.

Is there not provocation? my own reputation injured, and the miſtreſs of my heart and beſt affections now ſuffering from

from the conſequence—Oh let thy experience direct thy friend.

G. BENSON.

LETTER LXIII.

To Miſs CLINTON.

I Told you in my laſt, I had then reaſon to be aſhamed of myſelf. Alas, I fear my dear friend that you now will wiſh to ſhun any cummunication with one who entertains ſuch contradictory ſentiments. All my boaſted fortitude is vaniſh'd, all my pretended reſolution ſunk in oblivion. You ſmile.

"Mr. Benſon is the cauſe of it."

Indeed Fanny it is but too true. I have ſeen him three times, converſed with him, nay more, this morning he ſpent two hours with me in my little retirement that I have deſcribed to you.

Ih ear

I hear you aſk if he has ſo ſoon overcome my ſcruples? if all thoſe cauſes I had to object againſt an intimacy with him are removed? or whether they ceaſe to exiſt? Ah no—But yet he himſelf has partly ſatisfied me. I have given almoſt implicit credit to his aſſeverations. His words had the ſemblance and I hope the reality of truth, and forced my belief to attend on them. This was done in the two firſt conferences I had with him: and he told me ſuch a ſtory of Lord Averſton's hypocriſy, that would ſhock you only to hear related. Perhaps I had not been ſo eaſily perſuaded by Mr. Benſon, had not my aunt returned again to her former method of forcing me, by the ſtrength of her reaſoning, to do what I moſt ſincerely abhorred.

The day after I had ſeen Mr. Benſon the ſecond time, Lady Grigſby came into my dreſſing room, and diſmiſſed my attendant.

You

"You are ſenſible my dear Matilda," ſaid ſhe, "that from your earlieſt infancy, "I have ever behaved to you as a mo- "ther. Not being bleſſed with any chil- "dren, I have had the ſame regard for "you as I ſhould have had for my own: "and you have till very lately repaid "all my troubles with your affection "and fondneſs. This you may be ſure "was extremely agreeable, and rendered "you ſtill more dear to me. But your "uncle and I obſerve of late that you "not only diſregard every thing we ſay "to you, which tends to enſure your "future happineſs in life, but you alſo "are blind to your own intereſt. This "occaſions a great deal of concern and "trouble to us both, who really love you; "and we cannot ſee, without the great- "eſt uneaſineſs, your adherence to fooliſh "opinions, and ſuch an obſtinacy in your "nature."

"Really,

"Really, Madam, I am at a loſs to "know how I have deſerved theſe accu- "ſations. I ever paid the greateſt defe- "rence to your advice and directions. "I have ever obeyed you as a child: "then ſurely you ſhould not at this ad- "vanced age, when I am capable of diſ- "cerning between good and evil, charge "me with oppoſing your intentions or "contradicting your deſigns."

"Yes Matilda I can. Your obſtinate "refuſal of Lord Averſton, a nobleman, "who dies for you, who relinquiſhes "every thing for you, and whoſe ſince- "rity and ardent paſſion does not merit "this treatment from you: there you "oppoſe my deſigns, and your own "good."

"I have already declared to you madam, "that I can never accept of Lord "Averſton: and thought you would "ceaſe to importune me any more on "that ſubject."

"I do

"I do not know child, how you can "refuſe him conſiſtently with your cha- "racter now, after his long courtſhip, "and the encouragement you have given "him."

"Your Ladyſhip may have given him "encouragement, ſaid I, interrupting her," "but I never did."

"The world Miſs, it ſeems, is of the "ſame opinion with me though," replied my good aunt with a ſneer, "and the "public have been informed of the whole "affair."

"I apprehend that I have very little "to do with the public, or the public "with me or my affairs, Madam."

"Nay, Miſs, don't be angry: I will "ſhew you my authority for ſpeaking." And ſhe pulled a news paper out of her pocket.

"Read this," added ſhe, pointing out a particular paragraph to me.

I read

I read with vexation not to be described, the following:

'We are informed that a treaty of 'marriage is now on foot, between Lord 'Averſton and Miſs Matilda Conyers, 'and that their nuptials will ſoon be ce-'lebrated.'

"Now, Miſs, you ſee what notice the "world takes of your proceedings; and "you will alſo find their cenſures more "diſagreeable, if this match is broke off "through your perverſeneſs and obſti-"nacy."

I was ſome time before I could make a reply.

"I perceive Madam, that the villainy "and art of I know not whom, are "aiming to make me wretched; but "this will never have the deſired effect. "I am not to be menaced or frightened "into the commiſſion of an action that "is ſo diſagreeable to me, or which will "be attended with ſuch irremediable bad "conſe-

"conſequences. You muſt have a very "bad opinion of my underſtanding Ma- "dam, if you ſuppoſed this ſtep would "have any other effect on me, than to make "me more thoroughly reſolute in my "averſion to the author of it."

"If you mean Lord Averſt on, I am "ſure you wrong him. But I fear Matilda "you have not forgotten that worth- "leſs fellow in London, whoſe appear- "ance made ſuch an impreſſion on you: "and you will give me leave to ſay, Miſs, that "your underſtanding received no honour "in your ſhewing fondneſs for a man "you had ſcarcely ſeen."

I am tired of repeating theſe dull things to you, Fanny, and relating this war of tongues. My aunt, before ſhe left me, endeavoured to allay the ſtorm ſhe had raiſed; and uſed every argument ſhe could think of to induce me to be favourable to her friend. But I know more of him than ſhe imagines I do.

The

The more ſhe oppoſed Lord Averſton to Mr. Benſon, and the more I honoured the latter. They tell you that we women go by contraries, and that our deſires always run in prohibited channels—it may be ſo: or perhaps I may want an excuſe for my own conduct, ſhould it not be right. The praiſing Lord Averſton made me more eager to ſee Mr. Benſon. Is it not a ſad caſe, my ſweet friend, that I am forced to conceal my actions in this manner; to affect privacy, and ſteal to meet a man in ſecret, when I can ſee no reaſon I have to avoid meeting him in public as an acquaintance? It is hard for the moſt innocent actions, to aſſume the appearance of guilt, and that I ſhould be obliged to demean myſelf as if my intentions were criminal. Yet I muſt ſuffer every imputation, however baſe, that may be caſt on me, or elſe ſubmit to Lord Averſton's tyranny. His ſubmiſſion is more abject than becomes

comes a man, and is as ſhocking as his former haughty behaviour. It makes him more diſagreeable to me than before; for he muſt either be a maſter of deceit, or elſe have a very ſmall ſhare of regard for me, who can ſo eaſily aſſume ſuch different appearances. If I can judge of any one by appearances, the conſtant and ſteady conduct of Mr. Benſon ſhews more truth in it. I talk of Mr. Benſon—I cannot help it.—Had you, like me, *liſtened to the honied muſic of his vows*, like me, perhaps, you would have been taken with them. With the earlieſt dawn of the day he was at the window of my ſtudy; a cloud of grief overſhadowed his countenance; his eyes confeſſed the agitation of his mind.

"Ah," ſaid he, "why would you deceive "me? You expect candour in me, and "you yourſelf are moſt deficient in it. "Why would you give me hopes, unleſs "to make my fall more dreadful? or why

"would you ſuffer me to cheriſh wiſhes "that muſt never be indulged?"

"What right have you to charge me "with want of candour, or deceiving you, "Sir?"

"Either you have deceived me, or are "injured yourſelf, for the publick papers "have given you to Lord Averſton. If it "is with your conſent, I am the moſt mi- "ſerable of mankind. But I will not be- "lieve you could tell me, that you had "no favourable intentions towards him, "when you deſigned to bleſs him with "your hand. I cannot think you could "be guilty of ſo deliberate an act of cru- "elty, as that of inſpiring me with hopes "of obtaining you, at the moment you "were engaged to another."

"You do me juſtice, Sir, in that ſup- "poſition, for I ſhould eſteem it baſe and "mean to deceive you. I have alſo heard "of that report, and am not more ſur- "priſed, though more vexed at it than "you

"you can be. What encreaſes my con-
"cern is, that I know not the author of
"it."

"Oh Matilda, you may well ſuppoſe
"the author of that to be the ſame perſon
"who alſo impoſed upon me."

While we were talking, a very heavy ſhower of rain fell. I lamented the neceſſity he was under of ſtanding in it, telling him, at the ſame time, that I dreaded, leſt he ſhould be ſeen by ſome of the ſervants of the houſe, if I brought him in by the door. He aſked me if I would give him permiſſion to come in. I replied I would, if it could be done without expoſing myſelf to a manifeſt hazard of being liable to the cenſure of my enemies. Before I could add any thing to what I had already ſaid, he took advantage of my eaſineſs, and with an unexpected agility, ſprung in at the window. Theſe men, Fanny, are always on the watch to ſeize every little favourable circumſtance. No

vigilance can be too great to guard againſt them; and careful ſhould we be in every trifling conceſſion we make them, leſt they may deduce conſequences, which we have not the moſt diſtant idea of at the moment. Mr. Benſon however gave me no cauſe at that time to repent of the indulgence I allowed him. His behaviour was ſuch as I could have wiſhed, and gave me a better opinion of him than I had before. He appeared pleaſed with the furniture of my ſtudy; and I could gather from his remarks, that he is extremely well acquainted with all the Engliſh and French authors of any note; he is alſo well verſed in Italian, which I am a little deficient in. He entreated me to play for him. I obliged him, and he was kind enough to praiſe me. I ſuſpected, by his talking of muſic, he alſo performed; he apologiſed for himſelf, but I quickly found his was a maſter's finger. We parted, I muſt own, unwillingly on my ſide: if he is to be credited,

it

it was painful to him. I could not avoid thinking of him after he was gone; the poſſeſſion of ſo many polite accompliſhments, plainly ſhews him ſuperior to the common claſs of mankind. They would be uſeleſs to any one in an inferior ſtation, and not worth the pains and time that muſt be neceſſarily ſpent in the acquiſition of them. But there is ſomething in his manner and behaviour that beſpeaks the gentleman, the man of breeding, more than all this knowledge. The mere man of letters has nothing elſe to recommend himſelf but his learning. In attaining that, he neglects thoſe little *agreemens*, without which a man can never pleaſe. To unite them with ſkill, is the diſtinguſhing characteriſtic of the fine Gentleman. But though I may eſteem theſe good qualities in Mr. Benſon, they did not make me ſwerve from the rule of action that I had preſcribed for myſelf. I liſtened to him with attention, and was pleaſed with his aſſur-

ances of unalterable affection, but ſtill objected to this clandeſtine and underhand method of proceeding. He declared that the fear of loſing ſight of me again, only made him purſue it; that he would approach Sir Marmaduke's houſe in his own character, if I would permit him. But this, till the next winter might produce ſome alteration, I thought it better to prohibit. From a ſcene that was ſo pleaſing to me, I was ſoon obliged to engage in one that was totally diſagreeable. Lord Averſton, whom I had not ſeen the preceding day, he being on a viſit to ſome of his acquaintance in this country, returned late laſt night. This morning he pretended to be in a great rage with the printer of the paper, who had made ſo free with my name, and threatened them with his vengeance, for daring to inſert ſuch a falſity.

"But," added he, "Miſs Conyers, it is "in your power to make this prediction "true,

"true, though ſcandalous and falſe as it is "now."

I told his Lordſhip that I had already informed him of my ſentiments, and aſſured him they were not altered. This produced ſome lamentatons, and complaints of the ſeverity of his fate, and that he was not able to render himſelf agreeable to me. This is the mortification attending on thoſe things which the world calls Happineſs; for ſuch they eſteem the poſſeſſion of a large fortune: but experience teaches me otherwiſe, and the more reaſon we have to expect eaſe and pleaſure, the leſs able are we to bear trouble, and misfortune is more ſeverely felt by us. Farewell, dear Fanny, and do not forget your affectionate friend,

MATILDA CONYERS.

LETTER LXIV.

To WILLIAM ROGERS, Eſq.

OH fie, Rogers! Haſt thou any ſcruples that can have weight enough to interfere in the poſſeſſion of beauty, or to bar the enjoyment of love? Oh Will, I thought thou hadſt known better things.—Delay not, man. Rouſe Charlotte's jealouſy, awaken her reſentment againſt her perfidious lover. Let his other miſtreſs know his defection. Both actuated by ſimilar paſſions, will not fail to cruſh him in the ſhock of contention. Out of confuſion your ſucceſs will ariſe. Women are but cards in the hand of the judicious, to play as they pleaſe. Their paſſions are the trumps, which produced upon proper occaſions, never fail to ſecure the game. The ſkilful player reſerves the winning cards in his hand, till he ſees an opportunity offer for uſing them to advantage, and then

then he puts them in motion. But when theſe are all expended by the weak and ſimple gameſter, every thing goes againſt him. Nothing can equal, much leſs excel the blind rage of a woman who is jealous, and only ſuppoſes herſelf injured, or ſlighted, by a preference given to another. If ſhe loves the man who has thus neglected her, ſo much the better; for then ſhe abandons herſelf to the deſire of revenge, without any conſideration of conſequences; and the regard ſhe has for him, only heightens her rage. Then is the time to give good advice; I mean ſuch as will ſerve thyſelf. Enflame her reſentment; contrive methods of executing her ſchemes of revenge; ſtrike while the iron is hot, and there is no doubt of thy ſucceſs. You may reckon yourſelf extremely fortunate, in having ſuch an opportunity to improve. Charlotte, her rival, and Thompſon, are only ſo many pawns on the cheſs-board, which you may place as you pleaſe for

your own benefit. If Thompſon is the man I imagine him to be, from your deſcriptions of him, he will be the more eaſily circumvented. Thy ſiſter has the head, I adore the little cherubim for the thought. She has opened the road for you, and if you fail to purſue it, let the blame lay on your own folly. All I wiſh for is, that I had the ſame opportunity of inflaming this icy piece of clay that I am endeavouring to thaw. I ſhould not doubt of ſucceeding then; but I cannot catch her in any of thoſe moments, *when ſhe is warm, tender, and full of wiſhes.* Yet that ſhe has ſuch, is not to be diſputed. What unlucky devil thwarts me, I cannot gueſs, and yet I am as vigilant as can be. I can get no ſort of advantage over her, for if I had once obtained a footing, however ſmall, I ſhould deem myſelf tolerably ſecure. But now ſhe baffles me. My addreſſes are repulſed, my civilities ſlighted, and my paſſion is deſpiſed; and all this time ſhe

pre-

preſerves the demeanour and carriage of a ſaint. But I will never judge of womankind again, if that delicious plumpneſs ſhe poſſeſſes, thoſe ſparkling eyes, thoſe coral lips that ſwell with ripeneſs, thoſe cheeks that the hand of health ſheds roſes on, and that boſom which might afford temptation to an anchorite, do not indicate ſomething more than a veſtal's coldneſs. She has almoſt made me loſe the opinion I had of myſelf, and am now at my *dernier reſort*. It is the nature of man to have his paſſions rouſed by contradictions, and his deſires excited by difficulties. The things we can eaſily attain are neglected and deſpiſed, whilſt we ſeek for thoſe which fly us in the purſuit. The obſtinacy of Matilda has made me love her. I cannot bear the thoughts of relinquiſhing her in ſo inglorious a manner. As ſhe has ever repulſed my tendereſt addreſſes with the moſt mortifying coldneſs, and has ever avoided me as much as was in her power,

it entered into my head that ſhe could not continually maintain this averſion to me, without having ſome cauſe. Allowing that ſhe might have looked upon Benſon with favourable eyes, yet, as ſhe never had any converſation with him, ſhe could not be acquainted with his regard for her, and I think he is pretty well ſatisfied now. The ſervants of this houſe, as well as the owners of it, are all my creatures, and I have been enquiring among them diſtinctly. The gardener alarmed me, by ſaying he had ſeen a country fellow near young Madam's library, once or twice, but that he believed he was not what he pretended to be. I took little notice of it to him, but am determined to watch her ſteps. Perhaps this fellow may bring her letters. Perhaps he may be a rival in diſguiſe. Whatever he is, he ſhall not be long undiſcovered. Her maid tells me ſhe riſes very early in the morning, but that has ever been her cuſtom. She was always attached to her

ſtudies alſo, ſo there can be nothing extraordinary in that. But leſt there may be ſome ſcheme in agitation, prejudicial to my intereſt, it is my buſineſs to nip it in the bud. All I imagine is, that ſome perſon, perhaps employed by Benſon, has made attempts to ſee her, or deliver a letter to her, but has been diſappointed, for I do not think ſhe would undertake any thing underhand, which might be betrayed, ſubject her to her aunt's cenſure, and give me an opportunity of accuſing her with having dealt diſingenuouſly with me. For ſhe has declared ſhe does not, nor will not think of matrimony. If I ſhould diſcover her, I ſhall not fail to turn it to ſome good end. Do thou profit by my inſtructions, and you will reap the harveſt of love. Adieu, my good friend, and learn, that in matters where women are concerned, the loſs of a moment may be the deſtruction of your hopes. Farewell, be diligent and proſperous. Yours,

AVERSTON.

LETTER LXV.

To GEORGE BENSON, Eſq.

I Have received all your letters, dear Benſon, and though my age and infirmities will not permit me to keep up a regular correſpondence with you, yet it is fitting that I ſhould acknowledge the pleaſure I receive from your epiſtles, and at ſome times will anſwer them. This I hope you will deem ſufficient, and take in good part theſe trifling returns for your civilities; aſſuring yourſelf at the ſame time, that I am ſenſible of the honour of your confidence, which I can never betray, and which will embolden me to offer you that advice, which ariſes from my long experience in life, and from my being accuſtomed, from that caution and ſuſpicion ſo natural to age, to ſearch into the bottom of every thing, and examine

the motives from whence actions take their riſe. I have attended to the different ſteps you have purſued in the forwarding your amour with Miſs Conyers. She ſeems to ſmile on you, and you are in raptures. She liſtens to your vows of love, and you are tranſported. But in thus acting, you degrade your dignity and your family, by aſſuming and wearing a mean diſguiſe; and, even with regard to her, you are practiſing a deception, which, though of a venial nature, has not that openneſs and candour which ſhould be the diſtinguiſhing characteriſtic of a man of honour. You are now in the light of the hero of a modern novel, and the improbability of your ſucceeding with Miſs Conyers, only ſerves to heighten the fictitious diſtreſs of a work of imagination. Is it not likely ſhe is alſo acting with fraud towards you? A ſilly young girl is caught with the name of an intrigue. To have a lover in diſguiſe courting her at a window, is making her

the

the heroine of a romance, and realizing all the ridiculous notions ſhe may have extracted out of plays or novels. When her ſenſe or reaſon, if ſhe has any, returns, it will ſhow things in another light; and as we are ever apt to run into extreams, ſhe will ſhun every appearance of the concealment ſhe formerly delighted in, and abhored him who tempted her to abandon her prudence in liſtening to the addreſs of a perſon ſhe did not know; and every diſcovery you can make afterwards will not be ſufficiently powerful to regain her loſt affections. Perhaps ſhe means only to amuſe herſelf with you, whilſt vanity and pride, which are generally predominant in female hearts, and only give way to love of pleaſure, incline her to attend ſeriouſly to Lord Averſton's propoſals, and he poſſeſſes her heart whilſt ſhe is diverting both herſelf and him at your expence, nay, perhaps, he is a witneſs to your converſations by her appointment. This is not unlikely;

ly; and as you have been duped by his artifice once, you may now be deceived by her. I muſt confeſs that Lord Averſton has acted unlike a man of honour; he has done what ſhould make him be held in abhorrence. But the world will not think ſo: it will applaud his dexterity and cunning, and laugh at you for being ſo eaſily impoſed on. The generality of people argue and determine from the ſucceſs of the action whether it was good or bad, and they always pay a deference to fortune. Beſides, they will account all ſchemes allowable in love as well as war, and you are ſenſible it is held a ſtroke of policy and laudable generalſhip to outwit an enemy. I will therefore give you an opportunity of being even with him; and if Miſs Conyers is a woman of that good ſenſe you deſcribe, and poſſeſſed of thoſe juſt and delicate notions that ennoble a female breaſt, you will deprive him of her good opinion, and ſhe muſt hold his baſeneſs.

neſs and cruelty in the utmoſt deteſtation. Chance made me acquainted with this circumſtance, and if it can ſerve you, the particulars of it ſhall be made known to you; let it ſuffice at preſent to ſay, that it is a caſe where a young lady of a better family than fortune, was ſeduced by him in depending on his ſolemn promiſes of doing her juſtice; that he has abandoned her to the reſentment of her family without having even compaſſion enough to ſupport her, and the wretched fruit of their lawleſs loves. There are a great many aggravating circumſtances which you ſhall have, with a relation of the whole affair at length, if you chuſe it; always aſſuring yourſelf, that you may depend upon every thing I ſhall advance to be facts, and ſuch as cannot be diſputed. Indeed, publick report has not ſpared his private life in general. I know many of the accuſations to be true. With this advantage, I would have you repel fraud by the diſcovery of truth, and

reſcue

reſcue this young Lady from the hands of a man who can be guilty of ſuch diſhonourable actions. But it may be, Benſon, that thou art carried away by the heat of youth, and a ſanguine imagination, and perſuadeſt thyſelf, that, perſecuted as ſhe is, to oblige her to accept Lord Averſton, ſhe will throw herſelf into your arms without conditions, and that you will find another Mrs. Adderley in her. If you ſhould ever be inclined to attempt ſuch a thing preſuming upon the good opinion ſhe entertains of you, 'twill be a deed that

When ye ſhall meet at compt,
A look of her's will hurl thy ſoul from heav'n,
And fiends will ſnatch at it.

But what buſineſs haſt thou with a wife ſo early in life? Will it not be time enough ſome years hence to meet misfortune in the ſhape of woman? Then thy better ſenſe and experience will, perhaps, prevent thee from ever engaging with the perfidious

perfidious ſex, or elſe ſteel your heart with prudence and fortitude enough not to be affected by them. You ſtill find me adhering to my former principles: the reaſon is, becauſe every day's experience only ſerves to confirm me more and more in them. By accident I have diſcovered an acquaintance, whom I have long ſuppoſed dead, and with whom in my younger days I was very intimate. I had then heard by report that he had been very unfortunate with a wife he married for love, but was not acquainted with the particulars. As we have renewed our former intimacy, and I have dropped ſome hints that it would be extremely pleaſing to me to be informed of the ſtory, he has promiſed to lend me a manuſcript which contains the whole affair, and which he wrote at his leiſure hours to convince poſterity how much the world injured him in the reports that were ſpread of him. I have perſuaded him to let me communicate it

to you, pledging myſelf to him for your ſecreſy and concealment of it. The matter was attended with ſuch conſequence as rendered a flight from his native country neceſſary, and to which he has returned under a borrowed name, and in diſguiſe, dwelling in a part of the kingdom where he was an utter ſtranger, and living a moſt recluſe life. My recognition of him had like to be attended with the moſt fatal conſequences to him, ſo ſtrong were his apprehenſions of a diſcovery. You ſee what a confidence I repoſe in you, and may judge from thence of the greatneſs of my regard for you; where I not only diſcloſe the hiſtory of my own life and misfortunes to you, but alſo truſt you with thoſe of my friends. You may take this long letter as a very great compliment, for I have not wrote ſo much at a time theſe many years. Farewell, and believe me thy friend, as thou mayeſt merit,

R. ASGILL.

LET-

LETTER LXVI.

To ROBERT ASGILL, Eſq.

Can then a look create a thought,
Which time can ne'er remove?

IT can, it can, Aſgill. The ſmiles of Matilda engroſs my ſoul, and engage all my faculties. I can think, ſpeak, or write of nothing but her. Though abſent from me, ſhe governs my actions, and regulates my thoughts; for I ſhould be aſhamed to harbour an idea, which ſhe ſhould think amiſs of me for entertaining. How different are the ſenſations ariſing from a pure, a generous paſſion, from thoſe which brutal deſire alone inſpires us with. I endeavour to render myſelf as perfect as I can both in body and mind, to become in ſome ſhape worthy of the woman I have placed my affections on. Didſt thou know her, Aſgill, great as thy aver-

ſion

ſion to the ſex is, thou wouldſt except her from the general cenſure which they meet with from you. A greater purity of manners, or more improved underſtanding never was joined to ſo beautiful a perſon. Monteſquieu, whom you have often heard me mention with particular veneration, ſays,

"The laws of the two ſexes has eſtab-
"liſhed among civilized nations, that men
"ſhould aſk, and women only grant.
"Hence it happens, that grace is more
"peculiarly attached to the women, as
"they have all to defend, they have all
"to conceal."

It is in the manner of granting, that the peculiar grace reſides: you may receive the greateſt favours from ſome women without thinking yourſelf obliged; whilſt the moſt trifling conceſſion from another, becomes an act of kindneſs by the graceful manner in which it is granted.

"One

"One of the moſt beautiful fictions of "Homer," continues the ſame elegant author, "is that of the girdle which gave "Venus the power of pleaſing. Nothing "is more proper to make us conceive that "magic and power of the graces, which "ſeem to be given to a perſon by an invi- "ſible power, and are diſtinguiſhed from "beauty itſelf. Now this girdle could not "be given but to Venus: it could not agree "with the mageſtic beauty of Juno, for "majeſty requires a certain gravity, that "is a conſtraint oppoſite to the ſimplicity "of the graces; it could not agree with "the proud beauty of Pallas, for pride "is contrary to the ſweetneſs of the graces, "and may often be ſuſpected of affecta- "tion."

The great myſtery, then, is to unite the graceſulneſs of that power of pleaſing which beauty poſſeſſes, with the haughtineſs of grandeur, and the pride of wiſdom. But there may be beauty without that

that power of pleaſing, and a face leſs fair may poſſeſs it—They may and often do exiſt independent of each other, and each are charming. But how great and irreſiſtible muſt the attraction be, where they unite. Thus I recapitulate the excellencies of Matilda, when I am abſent from her. There is but one idea that my mind is capable of receiving, and that is Matilda, but it is a compound one—for all her perfections are repreſented at the ſame time. Hence it is that I ſit down to write to you in praiſe of the lovely maid, prejudiced as you are againr the ſofter ſex. But I cannot deſcribe to you my own feelings, nor—

The receipt of a letter from you has interrupted me—I thank you for it, and prize it in the manner it deſerves; the proof of your regard and friendſhip for me. But it has given me a mixture of

pleaſure and pain, which I did not before imagine, could ariſe from any correſpondence with you. Your letter is moſt agreeable as it aſſures me of your eſteem, and affords me an opportunity of explaining my ſentiments to you; but it gives me no ſmall degree of uneaſineſs, to imagine you can entertain ſo deſpicable an opinion, or think ſo ill of me as you do. If Miſs Conyers has a mind to deceive me ſhe can do it very eaſily, for ſo devoted am I to her, that ſhe can make me believe what ſhe pleaſes; but truth dwells on her lips, and her ſoul abhors the duplicity of diſſimulation.' Such is my good opinion of her varacity and the integrity of her heart, that I would pledge my exiſtence in the ſupport of her uprightneſs—Yet ſhe may deceive me.—But I will not imagine a circumſtance that leads me to deſpair. I hope ſhe will not; and the ſincerity and candour with which I adore her,

her, will be an example for her to follow. I confeſs that my being here diſguiſed, and ſeeking interviews with Matilda in the private manner I am now forced to do, is highly diſagreeable to me. But ſure there can be nothing criminal in it, when my deſigns are of the moſt honourable nature. If I can perſuade her to eſteem George Benſon diſguiſed as a peaſant, will ſhe have leſs regard for me, when ſhe finds I have no contemptable title to lay at her feet? ſure I am not to be condemned for endeavouring to render myſelf agreeable to her in any manner. And ſhould I be ſo bleſſed as to call her mine, will not the remembrance of our paſt difficulties, endear the hour of pleaſure, and augment the enjoyment of happineſs? —But this diſguiſe might be defended from neceſſity—For were I known here, Lady Grigſby, who is my enemy, and who favours my rival, would through

his means remove her from me for ever perhaps. But can I believe, or would you have me really imagine, that ſhe can deliver her ſentiments of Lord Averſton to me, ſo much in his diſfavour; and yet maintain a ſecret correſpondence with him, to admit his addreſſes and repay his vows?—Oh, I cannot, I muſt not believe it, becauſe ſhe told me to the contrary; and it would be doing the greateſt injuſtice to my affection for her, to entertain the leaſt doubt of any thing ſhe told me. But had I any reaſon to ſuſpect that it was as you repreſent it, it would be the ſtrongeſt reaſon with me, why I ſhould not diſcloſe to Matilda the criminal actions of her lover. If ſhe favoured him, ſuch a relation would ſavour too much of envy and reſentment coming from me, to gain the credit I ſhould deſire to attend every thing I advance. But ſhould even the facts be proved, they might not alter her opini-

on of him, and my character would appear in a light that would reflect no honour on me. If he ſhould be united to her, the knowledge of this affair, might only ſerve to make their lives uneaſy, and render them ſuſpicious of each other. If ſhe does not eſteem him, the acquainting her with it will be an unneceſſary piece of malice in me. At any rate I judge it better to conceal it. Perhaps if he weds her, the perfections he will find in his wife may make him alter his ways: he may repent and be happy. Though he deprives me of every thing I wiſh for on earth in her, I will not interrupt his joys, nor diſturb the pleaſure ſhe may enjoy with him. Conceal it then, my friend, I conjure you; diſcloſe it not even to me, leſt, ſubject as I am to the frailties of human nature, my paſſions may at ſome time or another get the better of my reaſon, and the pangs of jealouſy, or the weak-

neſs of reſentment, may tempt me to betray what I think ought to be buried in oblivion. His conſcience will not ſuffer the remembrance of it to ſleep in his boſom, and let not my tongue add to his torments.

You uſe me ill, in ſuppoſing I could be mean or baſe enough to take advantage of his crimes, to forward my own intereſt, as well as for imagining me capable of entertaining a diſhonourable thought of Matilda. Ah, Aſgill, you know not whom you write of. Lawleſs deſire ſtands checked in her preſence, and the ſame eye that awakens love alſo controuls his actions. I have been with her ſince I wrote to you before, in the ſame room with her, alone: I did kiſs her hand but once; yet that was a recompence for all I had ſuffered for her. But if my proteſtations for her of affection and the vows of love I then made, were not as pure as thoſe which I offer up to heaven

heaven, then let me forfeit all my hopes of happineſs hereafter, and be the vrieſt ſlave that ever lived. But why will you be ſo cruel as to remind me of Mrs. Adderley? you well know my ſentiments of that matter, and how often I have repented my weakneſs in that affair. I cannot learn where ſhe is, nor has ſhe ever written to me. Would it were in my power to make her any amends for the injuries I have done her. That is a ſufficient example to me, to curb thoſe paſſions which, if once ſuffered to grow to an head, diſdain controul, and the indulgence of them imbitters our lives everafter.

With the knowledge I have of your principles and notions, I ſuppoſe you will hold me in deriſion for entertaining ſuch tender ſentiments for the fairer ſex. But ſurely when you were young, you felt the force of that paſſion you now would have me relinquiſh. We are not

prevented from going to ſea, though we hear of ſhipwrecks every day; the hopes of gain and returning ſafe, enable us to ſuſtain the dangers of the winds and waves. Nay, though a ſailor who had been caſt away was to warn us againſt it, yet the examples of many who eſcape, would make us neglect his admonitions; each of us expecting to be one of the few who profit by the voyage. 'Tis thus in taking wives: for though I can by no means ſubſcribe to the opinion of thoſe who hold that they are good or bad as we make them, yet there may be methods of avoiding unhappneſs in the marriage ſtate. I know you will ſneer at me to hear a Batchelor and an infatuated lover, looking eagerly towards the enjoyment of his wiſhes, talking ſo methodically of matrimony—It is good to be prepared. I ſhall therefore expect with impatience the ſtory you promiſe to communicate

to

to me—It may be terrible, but nothing can intimidate me from loving Matilda. O Reilly ſeems to be of your mind with regard to the opinion you have conceived of female ſincerity. Whilſt I am in raptures with Matilda, and give vent to the tender emotions of my ſoul; he ſhakes his head very ſignificantly, and ſeems to hint that there is but ſmall dependance to be placed on a woman's ſmiles. What greater or equal cauſe he has to miſtruſt them I know not, though perhaps time may inform me. Let me then merit your friendſhip, for in every ſhape I will endeavour to deſerve it, nor ſhall you ever repent that you have called me your friend.

GEORGE BENSON.

LETTER LXVII.

To GEORGE BENSON, Eſq.

IN the name of wonder Benſon, what can keep thee ſo long in the country? In this time I concluded you would be tired of it, and have left ſuch lifeleſs ſcenes for the pleaſures of this great city. But you are in love, and nothing but ſolitude can nurſe your amorous cogitations. It muſt be very fine to ſurpriſe you in ſome of your meetings, and to overhear your romantic ſoliloquies—There is not a young oak or aſh about Mr. Mannerſley's houſe, that you have not cut the initials of your miſtreſſes's name on, or inſcribed a true-lover's knot. Very pretty amuſement indeed. Then I ſuppoſe you watch her as narrowly as a cat does a mouſe, and if you can but tread in her footſteps, eſteem yourſelf the happieſt man upon earth. Quit theſe fooleries,

fooleries, dear Benſon; the girl won't like you a bit the better for them. What opinion can ſhe have of you, who are always at her heels? the worſt quality in the world for an huſband; though no ſort of doubt remains but you will be cured of that after matrimony. Come to town, and leave her to herſelf for a while; depend upon it, ſhe will think more of you when you are abſent, than when you are eternally dangling after her. Beſides man, I have—ſomething to tempt you. What will not a man do for a friend? Knowing that it is impoſſible for you to ſubſiſt upon the light fare of looks and ſmiles, however delicious and charming I have provided a more ſubſtantial repaſt for you, where with the help of a little imagination, you may fancy your Matilda as kind as you pleaſe. It is not for every body I would cater ſo you may reckon upon this invitation as a particular proof of my

eſteem and regard for you. But perhaps you would chuſe to know how the land lies, and want a deſcription of the perſons before you leave the retreat of the loves, and quit ſhady groves, purling ſtreams, and flowery meads, for ſplendid rooms, convenient ſofa's and Turkey carpets—We'ere all in the ſnug private way—No interlopers, no ſwaggerers. I cannot abide ſwaggerers, as Mrs. Quickly ſays. Quite in the family way. Mrs. Lewis, the *Maitreſſe d' Hotel*, is about four and twenty, a fine woman, a handſome woman, and what more would you have? 'Tis true the luſtre of her charms is a little tarniſhed by her irregular living, for ſhe likes nocturnal banquets, and the feſtivity of the table. But you are repaid amply for the vigil you are obliged to keep by her vivacity which then begins to ſhew itſelf, and is not deſtitute of wit, and by the brightneſs of her fine black eyes, which then ſparkle

ſparkle with dazzling luſtre. You will forget the time of the night, and imagine yourſelf with one of Mahomet's houris. My firſt acquaintance was commenced with her while ſhe reigned, or rather tyrannized over the affections of a very rich merchant in this city, who was not the firſt that had her, though he imagined he was, which anſwered juſt as well—She was ſupported with the ſtate and dignity of an eaſtern Queen, and being naturally expenſive and extravagant, ſhe hurried him on. There were no bounds to her deſires, which met with every indulgence from him: the conſequence was, that he became a bankrupt, and ſoon after died. Her more particular friend now is a young man of very good fortune, who has put her in an elegant houſe, and furniſhed it ſumptuouſly. But as he has a dependence upon ſome parts of his family, who would not be at all pleaſed at a

connexion

connexion of this nature, he is obliged to conceal his purſuits as much as poſſible. He goes into the country often, and reſides there ſome time: this affords opportunities to our friends in town, who do not fail to make uſe of them. I had not ſeen Mrs. Lewis for ſome time, till the other day, when ſhe called me to her, and giving me her addreſs, deſired me to come and ſee her. But before I proceed let me clear up a point, which ſo ceremonious a fellow as you are, I ſuppoſe would take offence at, if not ſettled to your ſatisfaction: upon my honour we are no more than acquaintance. She is a ſprightly woman, before whom I can indulge a freedom of converſation, which, though innocent enough, might be offenſive to your prudes, old maids, and young outrageouſly virtuous women, who nevertheleſs are not in the main a bit better. I will confeſs very honeſtly to you, that when I went to

viſit

viſit her, my deſigns were not ſo blameleſs as my conduct has ſinee been. But a little accident prevented my purſuing the bent of my inclinations. When I called on her according to my promiſe, I was introduced, not without an air of myſtery, to her apartment, where ſhe deſired to ſee me alone.

"Hillgrove," ſaid ſhe, "I muſt caution "you concerning your behaviour with me, "while you are here. There is a young "Lady in the houſe, who is totally igno- "rant of me or my hiſtory. She is under "my protection, and came ſo by accident. "Now you are ſenſible I know how wild "you are; and I would not, for the world, "that ſhe ſhould imagine otherwiſe of me "than I have repreſented myſelf, the wife "of Mr. Lewis, who married me againſt "the conſent of his friends, and without "their knowledge, and therefore is obliged "to viſit me privately, and not ſo fre- "quently as he could wiſh. I ſhall intro-

"duce

"duce you to her as a friend of my huſ-
"band's. But unleſs you declare to me,
"that you will conform to thoſe rules I
"preſcribe you, ſhe ſhall be inviſible, and
"you obliged to ſpend a dull evening in a
"*téte a téte* with me."

I cannot help being a little curious whenever a girl is concerned, and would have promiſed five times as much, if ſhe had demanded it of me, to obtain a ſight of this girl. I ſwore to obſerve all the articles of the treaty: and ſhe told me how I ſhould behave myſelf. There was the appearance of myſtery, and an air of adventure in this affair, which delighted me much; for it was odd that a girl of character ſhould get into her hands, and not be able to find her out, though I aſſure you it is difficult to penetrate her actions, or their motives, when ſhe pleaſes to conceal them. But what came into my head, and ſtruck me moſt forcibly then, was, that ſhe had a mind only to excite my curi-

oſity

oſity for one of her friends, whoſe price ſhe deſigned to raiſe on me, and claim the ſole merit of introducing her to me afterwards. Theſe ſentiments, however, I concealed, and prepared for the interview with a great deal of ſatisfaction, ſmiling inwardly at my own prudence in foreſeeing the deſigns Madam had on me. I was conducted into a parlour where Miſs Whately was. She roſe at our approach, and I was introduced as the friend of Mr. Lewis. Miſs Whately is twenty, as I imagined. She is low in ſtature, though not diminutive. Her ſhape is extremely eaſy and genteel, with ſome of that *embonpoint* which I admire ſo much. Her face is pretty, and ſhe has very good eyes. Our converſation ſoon became general, and was carried on with a great deal of pleaſantry; and, by what I can obſerve, ſhe has both the conduct and language of a woman, who would at leaſt be thought modeſt. She ſeems to have a good deal of ſenſe, and a very pleaſing

pleaſing ſprightlineſs. I have ſeen her ſeveral times ſince, and can find no reaſon to alter my opinion; and this is the object that diverts me from Mrs. Lewis, to whom I would recommend you, and you will not only find her worth your pains, but will alſo forward my ſucceſs with Miſs Whately, for I am determined to have her, and I know Mrs. Lewis ſo well, that I am ſure you might do what you would, if once you were acquainted with her. This I think is ſufficient temptation to make you quit the country, to come and enjoy the delights of the town. And if it is not of weight enough to effect your removal, I muſt leave you to yourſelf, not without expreſſing ſome pity for you, to think how inſenſible you are grown to the delights of the world, and from thence muſt conclude you loſt to every thing, and more eſpecially to thine,

JAMES HILGROVE.

LETTER

LETTER LXVIII.

To the ſame.

I Don't know whether you had time to write to me ſince I ſent my laſt letter to you, neither am I deſirous to ſtand upon ceremony and punctilios. I am poſſeſſed with an itch of ſcribbling, and I muſt gratify it. But it is an ugly ſymptom, and I don't like it. You reckon it a ſign of a diſtempered mind to be fond of ſolitude, to waſte time in writing letters, and giving an hiſtory of your ſentiments. This is juſt my caſe, and ſomething more than ordinary has got hold of me. This Polly Whately it muſt be, or nothing. If I can recollect right, I was as eaſy and unconcerned a few days ago, as ever man was: juſt as uſual. Now I cannot forbear running to Mrs. Lewis's, whenever I put my head out of doors. And when in the houſe I can think of nobody but Polly Whately.

Whately. To tell you the truth, Benſon, I never was in ſuch a condition before: and if I continue any time in my preſent ſtate, I know not where it will end. I am indiſpoſed, it is certain, but I muſt have a fair phyſician to cure me. You will gather from this that I have ſeen Miſs Whately ſeveral times ſince I wrote to you before. I have not been able to keep out of her ſight, and the oftener I ſee her, the more deſirable ſhe is. She will not ſtir out with me, or receive tickets for the play, or any other public amuſement. Her manners and language ſpeak her of a different caſt from her companion: but yet by what means ſhe could get into Mrs. Lewis's cuſtody, and why live with her, unleſs to learn her trade, I know not. But if I ſhould be impoſed upon by the innocence of her demeanour, and her pretended virtue, it would be a ſtanding jeſt againſt me for ever. This conſideration determined me to try, the very firſt opportunity,

nity, whether I am deceived or no. It cannot be deemed an unpardonable offence, in Mrs. Lewis's houſe, to make a ſacrifice to Love. I would you were in town! of what great aſſiſtance you would be to me. Mrs. Lewis would be at your devotion, whilſt I ſhould engage this little infidel. She is very pretty, and have her I muſt and will. Nothing ſhall be ſpared that can poſſibly conduce to the great end in view. But I muſt give you one caution, or rather preſcribe one rule to you, which is to be the *ſine quâ non* of your introduction to Mrs. Lewis, viz, That you confine yourſelf to her, and do not thwart, in any manner whatſoever, my deſigns upon Miſs Whately, either by becoming my rival yourſelf, or by putting her on her guard. Theſe terms, punctually and religiouſly obſerved, may enſure you no ſmall ſatisfaction. Come then on the receipt of this. I am ſure you muſt be ſick of the country, and I long for you in

town.

town. You ſee I cannot enjoy any pleaſure without giving my friend a ſhare.

Yours,

JAMES HILGROVE.

LETTER LXIX.

To ROBERT ASGILL, Eſq.

MY troubles and difficulties, inſtead of ſubſiding, encreaſe; where they will terminate, or what may be the reſult of my coming into this country, I know not, but every hour ſerves to render my ſituation leſs pleaſing to me than before. You have intereſted yourſelf in my behalf, and I am troubleſome to you in conſequence of it. Yet forgive me, dear Aſgill, and adviſe me. I am reduced to a ſituation now, that makes advice neceſſary. If I ſhould add, that I wanted conſolation, it would not be far from the truth. Once

more I have loſt ſight of Matilda: ſhe is kept from my view, and I am miſerable. This morning, by her conſent, I attended her at the accuſtomed place of meeting; O Reily, by accident, accompanied me. He had ſpent the laſt evening with me, and turning out to be extremely wet and rainy, he was prevailed upon to remain at Mr. Mannerſley's. He offered his ſervice to me, and we walked together to Greenhill Park. I left him whilſt I went to meet the moſt amiable object of the creation. When I meant to apologize to him for leaving him alone, he told me he had enough to employ his thoughts till I ſhould return. Matilda was at her window when I preſented myſelf at the ſpot where I received all my happineſs. I obtained her permiſſion before I aſcended the window, which was but low, and got into the room. A cloud obſcured her countenance, and the traces of grief and trouble were very viſible in her face.

" It

"It leſſens the happineſs I propoſed to "myſelf, lovely Matilda, in ſeeing you "this morning, to find that you have ſuf- "fered from ſome cauſe of which I am "ignorant, and that you appear ſo trou- "bled. If it is of a nature that can be "communicated, make me maſter of the "ſecret; that if I cannot remove the "ſource of your uneaſineſs, you will ho- "nour me with allowing me to be parta- "ker of it along with you. Truſt me, "that you can impart your griefs to no "one who can have a more lively ſenſe "of them, or who is more deeply intereſt- "ed in them than I am."

"Have I not cauſe, Sir?" replied ſhe. "If you conſider my ſituation, you will "allow it yourſelf. My aunt, who claims "reſpect from me as a parent, and regard "and gratitude for the care ſhe has taken "of me in my infancy, preſſes, nay, al- "moſt commands me to receive for an "huſband a man whom I cannot eſteem.

Your

"Your paying your addreſſes to me, is the "cauſe of much trouble, becauſe they are "continually upbraiding me with favour- "ing you, of whoſe quality and ſituation "in life I am totally ignorant, and even "that circumſtance is a cauſe of accuſa- "tion againſt me. You, Sir, from the li- "berties which I have ſuffered you to take, "and my ſeeing you thus in private, muſt "be convinced that I do not liſten to your "ſuit with an unfavourable ear. But "what can you, or can the world think "of me, when they ſhall learn that I have "given you theſe opportunities of meet- "ing me in this clandeſtine manner? will "they not make free with my good name, "and will not even you hold me cheap? "Hear me out," continued ſhe, perceiv- ing I was about to interrupt her, "and "learn thoſe cauſes which create my un- "eaſineſs. It is not becoming a young "woman, who is by the bounty of her "anceſtors poſſeſſed of a fortune infinite-

" ly beyond her merits, who may boaſt of
" ſome rank in life, and who wiſhes to
" preſerve an unſullied reputation, to car-
" ry on an affair of this nature in ſo pri-
" vate and ſecret a manner. A diſcovery
" of it would be attended with the moſt
" diſagreeable conſequences: and what
" could ſhield my injured fame from the
" tongues of the malevolent, who would
" not fail to make every thing worſe than
" really it was? For theſe, and ſome other
" reaſons, Mr. Benſon, I am come here to
" meet you for the laſt time; for though
" there has been nothing in your behaviour
" that the ſtricteſt modeſty could take of-
" fence at, yet I tremble with apprehen-
" ſion, leſt the eye of ſuſpicion ſhould
" watch me, and learn the cauſe of my
" coming here ſo early in the morning.
" The fear of this makes every hour of
" my life unhappy: and till I am able to
" receive you in a proper manner, or till
" you can appear in that character which

" will induce my aunt to permit your ad-
" dreſſes, I muſt beg you to deſiſt viſit-
" ing me."

" Alas, Madam, prejudiced as ſhe is
" in favour of Lord Averſton, I can ne-
" ver hope for that permiſſion: by intend-
" ing to unite you to a man of quality ſhe
" weighs the advantages ſuch an alliance
" may be of to her, and will undoubtedly
" reject me. A plain gentleman will be
" but badly received where a peer pro-
" poſes."

" If you allude to me, Mr. Benſon, I
" muſt inform you, that I am totally un-
" ambitious of title or pomp, though I
" wiſh to poſſeſs happineſs. It would be
" ingratitude and imprudence in me to
" throw away that fortune which I am in-
" titled to in right of a genteel, if not a
" noble race of anceſtors, upon a man
" who had not birth and family to recom-
" mend him. The narrowneſs of his for-
" tune would be no objection to me: and

"I ſhould take a pride in raiſing a man "from oblivion, whoſe merits deſerved to "be placed in a more conſpicuous light. "This you cannot condemn me for, even "though you were a party concerned."

"No ſurely, Matilda, your determina- "tions are the reſult of prudence, and "the hand of diſcretion directs you. It "was unneceſſary to explain to me the "generoſity of your ſentiments. Your "face, however beautiful, or your perſon, "however charming and elegant, would "have wanted attractions to engage or fix "my heart, if your mental had not cor- "reſponded with your perſonal qualifica- "tions. I have watched, and obſerved "with tranſports, the delicacy and juſtice "of your ſentiments upon all occaſions; "and theſe were the rivets that faſtened "the chains of love. But this explana- "tion of your conduct, while it does ho- "nour to your generoſity and the good- "neſs of your underſtanding, is more

"particu-

" particularly directed to me. I have al-
" ready endeavoured to explain myſelf to
" your ſatisfaction; and truly ſorry am I
" that theſe doubts ſtill remain in your
" mind. I have no other means of re-
" moving them now, than by aſſuring you,
" if there is truth in man, that I am not
" inferior in family to Lord Averſton: but
" were I ſuperior, what would it avail me?
" My perſon and pretenſions are equally
" offenſive to Lady Grigſby, and I ſhould
" ſtill be rejected. The fear of that in-
" duced me to aſſume this diſguiſe, not
" more diſagreeable to you than to myſelf.
" Before you pronounce the ſentence of
" my baniſhment, think how I ſhall ex-
" iſt deprived of your ſight. Though
" you are not acquainted with the tendereſt
" of all paſſions, learn it from me; and
" know that there is no danger or difficul-
" ty I would not endure to be indulged in
" the exquiſite delight of ſeeing you, hear-
" ing you ſpeak to me, and finding you

" liſten with patience to my vows. The
" only conſideration which could tempt
" me to abſtain from theſe enjoyments is,
" the fear of rendering you uneaſy by
" them, or increaſing thoſe woes which
" you endure upon my account. But in
" what manner will you have me leave you?
" My heart, inſpired with the moſt pure
" and honourable affection, looks towards
" you for ſome return to preſerve the flame
" it burns with from expiring. 'Tis true,
" charming maid, I have already been bleſſ-
" ed beyond my hopes in perſuading you
" to receive my addreſſes ſo favourably.
" But as yet I have ſued in vain, and yet
" am I the ſlave of doubt and uncertain-
" ty."

" Ah, Sir, what conceſſion can I make
" you, or what return can you expect?
" Am not I at this moment acting in con-
" tradiction to my own reaſon, and to the
" deſires of my family, to oblige you?
" Do I not run the riſque of loſing what

" is

"is moſt dear to me by this condeſcen-
"ſion? What more will you have me ſa-
"crifice to you?"

"Nothing, nothing would I have you
"ſacrifice to me. I wiſh you to riſque
"nothing upon my account. But if ever
"my ſervices and unalienable affection ſhall
"teach you the ſweet leſſon of love, you
"will know how valuable every acknow-
"ledgement of affection, however trifling,
"is from thoſe we adore. Revoke the
"ſentence you have paſſed on me; permit
"me ſtill to ſee you, and to endeavour to
"convince you of my truth, and the pu-
"rity of my paſſion. Perhaps time may
"make an alteration in your ſentiments,
"and you may be won to pity me. It
"may be that I ſhall be ſo bleſſed to hear
"you confeſs, that when you find you ſhall
"not be diſgraced by them, my addreſſes
"may not be diſagreeable to you."

"Whatever may happen hereafter, Mr.
"Benſon, we are ignorant of; but I would

" recommend it to you to wait with pa-
" tience till that more favourable opportu-
" nity happens, in which I may ſee you with
" more ſatisfaction and credit to myſelf
" than now. I muſt repeat my deſire to
" you, to forbear viſiting me in this man-
" ner any more."

" Do you bid me abandon all my hopes
" too? cruel Matilda! Do you refuſe me
" the conſolation to know that the re-
" newal of my ſuit would be pleaſing to
" you? What have I done that you ſhould
" thus drive me to deſpair at once? Is it
" ſo great a crime to love you? But your
" preventing me from ſeeing you ſhall not
" hinder me from loving you. You will
" return to London in the winter which
" is now approaching, only tell me that
" you will give me an opportunity of ſee-
" ing you when there, and that you will
" permit me to inform you how miſerable
" I have been in your abſence. Let this
" hope remain to ſweeten the bitter cup of
" affliction

"affliction which I ſhall drink of in the "melancholy hours of ſeparation. Let "me expect it as the happieſt minute "of my life, to which I ſhall look for-"ward with the utmoſt impatience, and "count every intervening moment."

"Perhaps," replied the charming maid, with a ſmile, "you may have forgot me "by that time."

I was juſt going to aſſure her of the impoſſibility of ſuch an event ever happening, when caſting her eyes towards the window, which faced the avenue leading to the houſe, her colour forſook her face inſtantly, and a moſt deadly paleneſs aſſumed its place.

"We are betrayed!" exclaimed ſhe, ſtarting up from her ſeat; "and I am un-"done. Fly, for heaven's ſake! make "your eſcape as faſt you can."

I looked through the window, and perceived Sir Mamaduke and Lady Grigſby advancing towards the little ſtudy with all the

ſpeed they could make. There was no neceſſity of deſiring to fly to ſave Matilda's reputation.

"Farewell, Matilda. Death only ſhall "make me ceaſe loving you," was all I could ſay. She waved her hand, ſurprize having deprived her of the power of ſpeech. I was ſoon in a place of ſecurity and concealment. But a noiſe of people talking drew my attention, and I heard O Reilly's voice. The loudneſs and energy with which he ſpoke, made me imagine ſomething extraordinary had happened to him, and I made up to the place I had left him in with haſte. Before any of the parties could perceive me, I ſaw Lord Averſton with two ſervants, who were attempting to take hold of O Reilly.

"By my ſoul, my dear, but you ſhan't "touch me," ſaid he, "or if you do ſhillala "muſt walk:" ſhewing an excellent ſtick, which he had in his hand.

"Secure him, ye raſcals;" exclaimed his Lordſhip.

As they approached him, he knocked one of them down, and the other drew back.

"Your reſiſtance is fruitleſs, villain!" added Lord Averſton, drawing out a piſtol, and going up towards O Reilly. By this time I arrived at the ſpot, and with a lucky ſtroke of my ſtick, which for the better perſonating the character of a peaſant I generally carried, I made the piſtol fly up in the air.

"What three to one," ſaid I, in an affected country accent, "that's odds at foot-"ball."

"You ſhall pay for your preſumption, "ſcoundrel," replied his Lordſhip, preſenting another piſtol at me. Self-defence then obliged me to exert myſelf: I ſtruck at him again, and felled him to the earth. The ball happily miſſed me, though it went through the canvas frock I wore. One of the ſervants ran away to call for

help, and the other was ſtretched on the ground with Lord Averſton.

"Fly!" ſaid O Reilly, "fly! and throw "off your diſguiſe as ſoon as you can; "make your retreat good, and I'll join "you as ſoon as poſſible. If you are "known it will be all over with you: leave "me here, I ſhall do well enough, ho-"ney."

I took his advice, and being pretty nimble, I ſoon got out of ſight; then pulling off my peaſant's dreſs hid it in ſome buſhes, and purſued my way to Mr. Mannerſley's. Having always a key, I ſlipped into my lodge unperceived by any body, and threw myſelf on the bed to indulge my diſtracted thoughts, and reflect on what had paſſed. I did not repent of the blow I had given Lord Averſton; but of doing it in ſuch a manner, and being obliged, from the neceſſity of my affairs, to conceal myſelf after it. I had much rather gloried in it, and avowed to him openly

openly that I did it. The time, perhaps, may come that I ſhall not heſitate to tell him to his teeth, "This didſt thou."

Your's,

GEORGE BENSON.

LETTER LXX.

To the ſame.

MAnnerſley, when he came to viſit me, kindly partook of my affliction; for I now concluded it would be a long time before I ſhould ſee Matilda again, and lamented my misfortune in the moſt pathetic manner. The only comfort I could receive was, that I had not been diſcovered in the apartment with her, and that her aunt and Lord Averſton, whom I looked upon as the maſter-mover in this buſineſs, had nothing but ſuſpicions to proceed on; and whatever accuſations he might

might form againſt Miſs Conyers, they would all be deſtitute of proof. But much as I was concerned for myſelf, the thoughts of what Matilda would ſuffer ſtill gave me the greateſt diſturbance. She would now be expoſed to the reſentment of her aunt, and the perſecution of Lord Averſton, without a poſſibility of eſcaping it. I was doubtful whether ſhe would confeſs an interview with me, or whether ſhe would deny it. In every point of view which I then conſidered this affair in, it appeared confuſed, and full of trouble. It was more unfortunate too, to have a converſation interrupted, from whence I derived great hopes of learning from her the ſentiments ſhe entertained of me, and perhaps receiving ſome favours which hitherto ſhe never granted me. No, Aſgill, though I believe, and indeed ſhe has partly acknowledged that ſhe does not behold me with an unfavourable eye, and I could partly gather as much from the reception

ſhe

ſhe has given me, yet that is all I have to build my hopes upon; for when I preſſed my ſuit ſhe has ever objected difficulties, and raiſed doubts that I have been obliged to anſwer, and prevented my knowing whether ever ſhe had conceived the leaſt regard for me. The gentleneſs of her manner, gives me hopes that I may be able one day to touch her heart, but I made but a ſmall progreſs yet, if I can judge from her demeanour towards me. But you will ſay, "that I may obviate eve-"ry difficulty, reſolve every doubt, and ſa-"tisfy every objection by making a diſ-"covery of myſelf."

'Tis very true: perhaps I might, and perhaps not. But will you not allow ſomething to love and vanity? My motto is that of one of Marmontell's tales, *Tout ou rien.* Let me poſſeſs Matilda's heart and affections, and I wiſh no more. If once I am happy in her regard, I ſhall have nothing more to ſeek. To ſpeak ſeriouſly to

you,

you; it is now become the principal, and I may juſtly ſay, the only concern of life to merit her eſteem, and a return for my paſſion. It would be a flattering circumſtance to me to be able to win her as George Benſon. It would convince me that her affection was real, and not beſtowed on the rank and title I can confer on her. To effect this is all my deſign, all my wiſh. "But then," ſay you, "the difficulties "and troubles that occur in the execu-"tion of this intention are all of your own "ſeeking, of your own creation, and de-"ſerve not pity or compaſſion.

Yes, Aſgill, yes, they do. In any other ſtation, in any other manner of addreſſing her, I might never know the truth and reality of her ſentiments ſo well. It is to arrive at that knowledge I take ſuch pains, and which occaſions me ſuch heart-felt uneaſineſs. I love, Aſgill, I adore the charming Matilda: the hand of violence has removed her from my ſight, and keeps

her

her from me. I have not, in the mean time the moſt trifling aſſurance of her regard to preſerve my hopes alive. I love without return, and I live without peace or enjoyment. Is not this condition to be pitied? If you ſaw the effect my ſenſe of it has upon me, you would think that I merited compaſſion. The next thought that ſuggeſted itſelf to me, after that of Matilda's preſervation, was repentance for leaving O Reilly, even by his own perſuaſion, and deſerting him when he ſtood moſt in need of my aſſiſtance, to oppoſe the attacks of my rival, and my enemy. I expreſſed my ſentiments to Mannerſley. He aſſured me that it was unneceſſary to add to my afflictions upon O Reilly's account.

"He is," added he, "a ſenſible ſhrewd "man, and the beſt advice you could have "taken, was that you purſued. If you "were known, after what has happened "already in London, it would be imme-

"diately

" diately concluded, that you had been " with Miſs Conyers, and the worſt con- " ſtruction would have been put upon it, " that the nature of the affair would ad- " mit. You are hitherto entirely un- " known, and ſtill may remain ſo. I will " engage O Reilly will extricate himſelf."

What gave me the greateſt uneaſineſs was, to know how he firſt became engaged with Lord Averſton. Doubt and grief poſſeſſed my boſom. In the evening he came to Mr. Mannerſley's. I was truly rejoiced to ſee him, and embraced him with an affection he ſeemed ſenſible of, and pleaſed with.

" What dangers have you experienced " upon my account, my dear O Reilly! " What obligations am I under to you!"

" Pho, pho," replied he, " they are no- " thing at all. I would not give a traneen " for a man that would not do five times " as much to ſerve a friend. As for my " part,

"part, I have no greater ſatisfaction than "that of obliging an honeſt fellow."

When I aſſured him of my gratitude, and the ſenſe I had of his kindneſs, I entreated him to inform me how he came engaged with Lord Averſton, and how he got off.

"You ſhall know both," ſaid he, "and "had it not been for me, they would have "been upon you before you knew any "thing of the matter. I was ſauntering "about in the place where you left me, "and employed in my own meditations, "when I was diſturbed by the ſound of "ſome voices near me. I ſtopped, as well "to overhear them, as to prevent their "ſeeing me. Some thick ſhrubs hindered "them from obſerving me, and I had the "benefit of knowing what they were ſaying."

'Let us ſtay a little,' ſaid one of them, 'we are too ſoon: Sir Marmaduke will not 'be

'be there by the time we are, and our ap-
'pearance will alarm them.'

"This and ſome other things perſuaded
"me they deſigned to ſurpriſe you: and as
"the danger was ſo near you, I found it
"was impoſſible to give you notice in time
"to avoid it. The only thing then that
"was to be done, was to prevent them
"from going near you, or at leaſt to delay
"them for a time. They ſtaid where they
"were for a few minutes, and then they
"proceeded to the place where they were
"deſtined to; and juſt as they were going
"off, I gave a loud hilloah!—hilloah, ho!
"Imagining they were diſcovered, and
"that their deſigns would prove abortive,
"they came running to the ſpot whence
"the noiſe came, as they had no doubt but
"I was calling to the perſon they came in
"ſearch of. Their approach did not pre-
"vent my ſtill calling out. The chief of
"them, whom I have ſince learned to be
"Lord Averſton, your friend, though I wiſh

"he

"he had been known to me then, came "up to me, with a very fierce air, and de- "manded of me, whom I was calling to. "I gave him no anſwer, but kept on "bawling. I wonder you did not hear "me."

"My attention was otherwiſe engaged, "or elſe I ſhould have been alarmed: but "I never heard you, as I can recollect."

"I made noiſe enough" reſumed he, "to have alarmed any body. On my "taking notice of his Lordſhip, he de- "manded,

'Who do you want, friend, or to whom 'are you calling?'

'That's nothing to you,' replied I.

'Perhaps it is,' added he.

'I am ſure it is not, ſo go about your 'buſineſs, and let me alone.'

'I fancy, friend, you are here upon 'ſome bad deſigns.'

'Not ſo bad as you are, for you are 'very

'very troubleſome, and I want to get rid 'of you.'

'That you ſhall not do ſo ſoon as you 'wiſh. You look like a very ſuſpicious 'fellow, and that accent you aſſume will 'be no ſervice to you.'

'Why you thief,' ſaid I, 'if you did 'not like my brogue, I did not want you 'to hold any converſation with me, ſo 'once more I deſire you to go about your 'buſineſs.'

'You ſhall ſuffer for your inſolence, 'you raſcal. Where is your companion?'

'Why, did you ſee him?'

'Oh ho, we have caught one of them, 'and the other is not far off. Secure him 'directly,' ſaid he, turning to the ſervant that accompanied him.

'Hark ye, my lads,' ſaid I, as they were coming up to obey their maſter's orders, 'you had much better let me alone, for 'you don't know what you are about, ſo 'let me talk to your maſter there. Sir,' ſaid

ſaid I to him, 'you have abuſed me 'greatly, and treated me with very bad 'language, which, as I have the honour 'to be a gentleman, I am not accuſtomed 'to, and don't know how to bear it, and 'therefore I won't put up with it.'

'Seize him directly.'

"I ſhewed the ſtick to them as they "were coming up to me. He drew a piſtol. "I told him I did not mind his young guns "a farthing. At that inſtant you arrived, "and know what followed.

"You were not well out of ſight, when "the ſervant, who had ran away, came up, "with three other men. By this time Lord "Averſton recovered from the blow you "had given him, and had got up from "the ground, though yet ſtunned. Per-"ceiving me ſtanding before him, he de-"ſired I might not be hurt, and ordered "the ſervants to ſurround me."

'You need not trouble yourſelves,' ſaid I, 'to guard me, for I will go wherever 'that

'that Gentleman goes, to know who he is: 'for I will ſee whether he can ſtand by 'aſſaulting me in the high-road, and draw- 'ing a piſtol out upon me. There is law 'in England, and I'll have it.'

'You ſhall have as much as you pleaſe,' replied he, looking at me contemptuouſly.

"You know there is a public road "which goes through the Park, and there "is no incloſure of either ſide, and the "place where I was attacked was very "near it. I had alſo taken up the piſtol "which you had ſtruck out of his hand."

'This,' ſaid I, 'I ſhall produce, as a 'very extraordinary weapon to draw upon 'an unarmed man, going about his buſineſs.'

'Where is the country-fellow?' demanded he, recollecting himſelf.

"He was anſwered that he was gone."

'Purſue him, and raiſe the country but 'you muſt find him.'

'It is very hard that you will purſue a 'man who providentially ſaved my life.'

'I be-

'I believe, friend, that you will be able 'to give a very bad account of yourſelf.'

'Will you come along willingly, or 'muſt you be forced?'

'I ſhall go willingly.'

"We proceeded together to the little "houſe in the Park, where we found Sir "Marmaduke and Lady Grigſby. Miſs "Conyers was there alſo in tears when we "went in. I muſt own you have a good "taſte, for ſhe is really beautiful, and "though I have ſeen her before, I never "thought ſhe was half ſo handſome. At "the ſight of Lord Averſton and me, ſhe "turned her face to the window, and kept "her back towards us. His Lordſhip's "head was cut with the ſtroke you gave "him, which, though neither deeply or "dangerouſly, nevertheleſs cauſed an ef-"fuſion of blood. Lady Grigſby ſcreamed "at the ſight.

'Oh my Lord, how came you in this

'condition? Are you hurt? For God's 'ſake have ſome aſſiſtance.'

'I am a little hurt,' replied he, 'and 'this man can give you ſome account how 'I came in this condition.'

'What, Captain O Reilly!' ſaid Sir Marmaduke; for he had often ſeen and dined with me at Mr. Mannerſley's, and I had once been at Greenhill Park.

'What, do you know him?' ſaid his Lordſhip.

'Yes, very well. Was it he reduced 'you to this condition? has he aſſaulted 'your Lordſhip?'

'No,' replied he, frowning, with an air of impatience and vexation, 'there has 'been ſome fatal miſtake here.'

'It is I who have been aſſaulted by this 'Gentleman, if he is a Lord; who to ſhew 'his courage, drew out this piſtol upon an 'unarmed man.'

'Sir,' replied he fiercely, 'I ſhall ſhew 'you my courage in a proper place.'

'By

'By my ſoul, my dear, I ſhould be very 'glad to ſee it,' returned I; 'and in the 'mean time, I deſire Sir Marmaduke, that 'you'd let me ſwear againſt this Lord, and 'theſe two fellows here, who aſſaulted me, 'for I ſhould not have been here to ſwear 'at all, if it had not been for an honeſt 'countryman who knocked the piſtol out 'this Lord's hands.'

'Sir,' ſaid his Lordſhip, 'it does not be-'come you to ſhew your inſolence here.'

"I was going to reply, when Sir Mar-"maduke and Lady Grigſby interpoſed; "and having acknowledged that I bore a "very fair character, and ever had pre-"ſerved the appearance and demeanour of "a Gentleman, owned that it was an un-"happy miſtake of his Lordſhip's, who "had another deſign than that of aſſaulting "me, and requeſted that I would over-"look it."

'Why would not you explain yourſelf 'to me, Sir?' ſaid his Lordſhip, 'and let

'me know who you were, ere we committed this error.'

'Becauſe your Lordſhip addreſſed me 'with more *hauteur* and pride than I was 'accuſtomed to meet with. Your fierceneſs had no effect upon me, and therefore 'I determined not to ſatisfy you.'

'Well, Sir,' ſaid he, 'if you eſcape me, 'I ſhall have my revenge ſatisfied in puniſhing your accomplice, for I cannot 'imagine the fellow who uſed me ſo ill to 'be any thing elſe.'

'Then I will tell you what, I will defend him againſt you to the utmoſt of my 'power: but, my Lord, we are in the preſence of the Ladies, who do not like 'to hear of things of this kind. However, at the interpoſition of Sir Marmaduke here, I won't take the law of you, 'but I ſhall reſerve to myſelf all the rights 'of a man whoſe honour is injured, and 'who has ability and inclination to avenge 'the wrongs done to it.'

"At

" At that inſtant a man returned, bring-
" ing in the canvas frock which you wore,
" and which, by accident, he met with.
" Lord Averſton expreſſed much concern
" that you were not to be found, and ſwore
" he would uſe every means in his power
" to diſcover you. When it was diſplayed,
" to ſee if there was any mark on it, which
" might lead to a diſcovery, the holes
" which the ball made in paſſing through
" it, appeared very plainly. I could not
" let that opportunity eſcape to plague
" him more."

'It is very well,' ſaid I, 'that the poor
'honeſt fellow was not hurt. He had a
'very narrow eſcape, for the ball went
'through and through his coat here.'

'I wiſh it had gone through his heart,'
replied he, foaming with rage and ſpite.

" Miſs Conyers turned about to ſurvey
" the mark of the ball, and beſtowed a
" look of ineffable contempt and indig-
" nation on him. She ſpoke not a word;

" but returned to her former ſtation in " the window."

'I will give an hundred guineas,' ſaid his Lordſhip, 'to any man who will pro-'duce the fellow that ſtruck me.'

'Well, you may do as you pleaſe my 'Lord, but I ſuppoſe you have no more 'to ſay to me.'

'I never deſire to ſee you again.'

'If you ſhould, you will find me at '——. But I ſhall deſire to ſee you ſome 'time or another.'

'See, Miſs Conyers', ſaid Lady Grigſby, 'what trouble and diſaſters your conduct 'occaſions!'

" The poor dear creature replied not a " word."

'Well then, I'll take my leave; ſo La-'dies your humble ſervant, and yours, 'gentlemen.'

" And ſo I went away, not before I had " received a very gracious look from the " young Lady, and a very ſignificant nod " with

"with her head. The old one did not "ſeem ſo well pleaſed, but I was very "eaſy about that. So I went home from "thence; and ſuppoſing you would be "uneaſy till you ſaw me, I came here to "tell you what happened."

Thus the honeſt, generous O Reilly ended his narration. And I muſt end my letter, for I have ſcarcely room to aſſure you I am

Yours,

GEORGE BENSON.

LETTER LXXI.

To the ſame.

YOU muſt imagine me void of every ſentiment of honour or gratitude, if you believe me incapable of feeling or acknowledging the ſervices this gentleman had rendered me, and more eſpecially to

Matilda, whoſe peace of mind and good fame have both been ſecured by his politic and friendly conduct. The account he gave me of her trouble, and the reproaches ſhe met with from her aunt, cauſed infinite uneaſineſs in my mind. I abandoned myſelf to the moſt afflicting reflections, and lamented, in the ſtrongeſt manner, my own imprudence, that reduced the woman, whom I ſo truly loved, to ſo mortifying a ſtate. I underwent inexpreſſible torments from the variety of paſſions which my breaſt was fraught with. One while, the thought of the affliction Matilda was overwhelmed with, expoſed to the ungentle correction of an intereſted and deſigning woman, to reflect how her ſpirit muſt be humbled and mortified, to endure ſuch perſecution in the preſence, and upon the account of a man whom ſhe could not eſteem, filled my heart with tenderneſs; but rage ſoon aſſumed its place, when I conſidered my own inability to relieve her, and

remove

remove the cauſe of her preſent uneaſineſs, whilſt my rival enjoyed her preſence, and was always with her. Great as I had reaſon to believe Matilda's diſlike was to him, yet a doubt aroſe whether ſhe would be able to withſtand the ſolicitations, or rather commands, of her aunt, armed with a parent's authority. Whether ſhe might not be overcome by Lord Averſton's aſſiduities, and to obtain a ſhelter from the daily troubles which afflicted her, yield to his earneſt addreſſes. This diſtracted me, and I was on the point of avowing myſelf, and braving him to decide, by the law of arms, to whoſe lot the glorious prize ſhould fall. The greateſt part of theſe ſentiments I imparted to O Reilly, who endeavoured to conſole me in the beſt manner he was able. I only concealed my real ſituation in life from him, though at that time I had conceived a great regard for him, and determined to do him every ſervice in my power, if he ſtood in need of any aſſiſtance from

me. The affection he expreſſed, and deſire to ſerve me, claimed a proper return. He merited, and obtained, my friendſhip. He conſidered the diſcloſing my ſentiments to him as a proof of it; and he failed not to act the part of a judicious and affectionate friend.

"You are much younger, ſaid he to "me, than I am: the experience of the "world, and the hardſhips of life are "yet unknown to you. Seek not to "create misfortunes for yourſelf, but "ſhew a fortitude in reſiſting them. You "are this moment afflicting yourſelf for "the loſs of an imaginary good, and it "may be that you have eſcaped a real "evil. A fair face, and a beautiful "perſon, captivate your youthful ima-"gination, and in the poſſeſſion of them "you have placed all your happineſs. I "will allow it may add to your felicity, "but it ſhould not conſtitute it ſolely. "You are the child of proſperity—are "ſecured from the attacks of woe in

"ſome ſhapes. But if your heart cannot
"reſiſt ſo trifling an accident as this,
"what would you do if you were de-
"prived of fame, of fortune, of family,
"and of your miſtreſs at once?"

"Ah, ſaid I, I ſhould expire, I ſhould
"be unable to oppoſe the torrent of
"misfortune, and giving way to it,
"ſhould be carried away with it. You
"have ſhewn me my weakneſs I con-
"feſs, my friend, but you have not
"taught me to cure it. Let your for-
"titude ſupport me, till an acquaintance
"with adverſity enables me to bear it.
"But have you ſuffered all thoſe evils you
"mention? Have you endured all theſe
"woes? Inſtruct me by your example
"how to repel the ſtroke of affliction,
"and let me learn from you how to bear
"misfortune."

"Mr. Benſon, returned he I have en-
"dured all which I have mentioned to
"you: but the remembrance of my

" troubles is almoſt dead in me, and it
" is awaking them only to lead me into
" freſh woes, if I ſhould inform you of
" my diſaſtrous life. There are ſuch in-
" cidents in it as are rarely to be met
" with, and there are many cauſes why I
" ſhould conceal it: but from the love
" I have conceived for you, ſo great is
" my good opinion of your honour and
" diſcretion, that I will open my heart
" to you. This muſt be done at ſome more
" convenient opportunity. My remaining
" here may create ſome ſuſpicion, as Lord
" Averſton has his ſpies in every place.
" I muſt therefore delay indulging your
" curioſity for a few days, and in the
" mean time will endeavour to learn
" what reports this adventure has made
" in the country. I would recommend it
" to you to keep yourſelf as cloſe as
" poſſible, leſt any diſcovery ſhould be
" made, prejudicial to your intereſt or
" Miſs Conyers's reputation."

I parted

I parted from him with regret, and embracing him with great affection, conjured him to make his return to me in as ſhort a time as poſſible. I did not fail to aſſure him of my gratitude, and offer him my acknowledgements for the ſervices he had rendered me. I paſſed my time in his abſence very unhappily. Mannerſley viſited me as often as he could, and kindly endeavoured by his ſociety to leſſen the weight of my trouble. Had I been at all aſſured of Miſs Conyers's having any ſort of regard for me, that would enable her to reſiſt the united efforts of Lord Averſton and her aunt, I would have relied upon her fidelity, and found comfort in imagining her ſtill conſtant and reſolute to endure every thing, till the lapſe of time ſhould releaſe her from her guardians. I had abandon'd myſelf to my paſſion; and the love of Matilda, was become part of my nature. The Idea of the charming maid had

engroſſed

engroſſed my whole attention: I lived but for her. My mind, accuſtomed to reflect on her charms, could not employ itſelf in any other manner. I ſometimes reproached myſelf for ſuffering my paſſion to gain ſuch an aſcendancy over me: But this only ſerved to evince my weakneſs more fully; and ſhew the impoſſibility of ever baniſhing her from my thoughts. The evening of the third day, Mannerſley came to me with a letter in his hand.

"I know not, ſaid he from whence "this came, as it was incloſed to me "in a blank cover: it is a woman's hand, "which I am unacquainted with."

I haſtily broke it open, and found in reading it a revival of my hopes. It came from Matilda, and was in theſe words:

'The malevolence of Lord Averſton 'has been as yet diſappointed, and the 'perſon

'perſon who ſtruck him unknown. The 'ſum he offers for diſcovering of him, 'and the rage he expreſſes againſt him 'ſufficiently deſplay his deſire of revenge. 'I ſhould be ſorry that you were to ſuf-'fer; which would be the conſequence if 'you were known. It would be difficult 'to avoid both his public hate and pri-'vate malice. Your obeying the dictates 'of your reſentment would call my cha-'racter in queſtion, and I ſhould alſo 'ſuffer: I muſt therefore entreat you to 'conceal yourſelf till we are in London, 'whither we ſhall ſoon go. If you 'ſhould deſire to learn, Miſs Atkins will 'inform you what becomes of,

MATILDA.'

I communicated the contents of this billet to Mannerſley, who promiſed to introduce me to Miſs Atkins. My heart throbbed with joy at the peruſal of this teſtimony of Matilda's eſteem for me.

"I yet

"I yet may be happy ſaid I—yet may "I teach her to love, and warm her with "a ſpark of the flame that conſumes "me."

My notions became leſs melancholly, and hope once more returned. How uncertain is our ſtate who love! What a trifle dejects or elevates us! Reaſon forſakes us, and paſſion and caprice aſſumes the direction of us. Like madmen, our pleaſures and pains conſiſt in a diſturbed imagination. Adieu.

GEORGE BENSON.

LETTER LXXII.

To the ſame.

O'REILLY did not come near me till the day after I received the billet I gave you an account of in my laſt. He partook of the joy I expreſſed on the occaſion.

"May

"May your happineſs ever laſt, my "good friend," ſaid he: "but if it de- "pends upon a woman's ſmile, I fancy it "will not be of long duration."

"Ah, do not be cenſorious, dear O Reil- "ly; but if you can do it without any "inconvenience to yourſelf, prepare to "gratify my curioſity, and give me your "reaſons for thus abuſing the fair part of "the creation."

"I will attempt to indulge you," ſaid he; "but I am not to be blamed for ſpeak- "ing ill of them, for the ſource of my "preſent evils ſpring from the artifice of "women. You muſt blame your own "curioſity if you find but little entertain- "ment in my ſtory, for few have been the "events of my life, though many have "been the days of woe that I paſſed. I "may, perhaps, forfeit your eſteem and "friendſhip by diſcloſing my origin to "you; but I think, from what I can learn "of your ſentiments, they are too liberal

"to

" to ſuffer you to deſpiſe a man for a fault
" he cannot help, and which is out of his
" power to remedy. I will take up as
" little of your time as I can, as well for
" your ſake as my own; for melancholy
" and hateful to me is the remembrance of
" the times that are paſſed."

" The beginning of my life was ſpent in
" poverty and diſtreſs. My father was
" extremely poor, and with difficulty pro-
" vided bread, with his daily labour, to
" ſupport himſelf, his wife, my brother,
" and me, who am the eldeſt of the two.
" It is unneceſſary to tell you the place of
" my birth, as you know very well from
" what country I came; but it will be
" needful to inform you that we were edu-
" cated in the Roman Catholic religion,
" which is that of the generality of the
" lower claſs of people in that kingdom,
" and our reſidence was in the metropolis
" of it. My father and mother were par-
ticularly

"ticularly fond of us, as we were the
"only children he had, though married to
"my mother many years. His affection
"for us was very viſible in the days of his
"poverty and adverſity, but he could on-
"ly then expreſs it by words; and he often
"lamented, when he ſaw us expoſed to
"thoſe hardſhips which were the conſe-
"quences of his inability either to feed
"or cloath us. Happy, truly happy,
"ſhould we have been had we never known
"any other ſtation, or been acquainted
"with any other condition: but it was not
"our lot, and we muſt reſt contented with
"the diſpenſation of Providence. My fa-
"ther, who conſidered his children as the
"greateſt comforts of his life, began to
"conceive ſome hopes of bettering our for-
"tune as we advanced in years. He had
"gotten an houſe, by ſome means or other,
"and let out lodgings: he obtained many
"acquaintances: being a plain, ſenſible,
"honeſt man, he gained friends, and they

recom-

" recommended him to others, and ſoon
" he found himſelf mending in the world.
" One gentleman made him his agent. His
" conſcientious and upright diſcharge of
" this employment made him ſtill more
" eſteemed, and cauſed others to take no-
" tice of, and truſt him. He got more
" agencies, and, in a few years, he was ex-
" ceedingly fortunate; and inſtead of ſee-
" ing himſelf ſurrounded with poverty
" and want, he now rolled in affluence,
" kept his carriage, and was amaſſing a
" fortune for his darling children. Thus
" ſtep by ſtep he mounted to a ſtation
" which his moſt ſanguine wiſhes could
" never give him the leaſt thoughts of
" aſpiring to: and by perſevering with di-
" ligence and unceaſing induſtry in his em-
" ployments, he ſucceeded beyond his own,
" or the expectation of the reſt of the world.
" He did not neglect his boys in this ſeries
" of proſperity: we taſted the effects of
" this happy alteration in his affairs, and
" receiv-

" received every advantage we could from " it. We had the beſt inſtructors in every " ſcience or accompliſhment that men of " the firſt rank could have; and no expence " was ſpared in an education to render us " as perfect as we could be. The partia- " lity my father had for us, cauſed him to " ſay," ' That the improvements we daily ' made amply repaid the coſt and pains ' he had been at about us.'

" I had obtained my ſeventeenth year, " and my brother his ſixteenth, when my " father began to conſider what was to be " done with us. Our religion forbad our " riſing in our own country, either in civil " or military employments. So perfect " was the friendſhip which then ſubſiſted, " and does ſtill ſubſiſt between my bro- " ther and me, that we reſolved to em- " brace the ſame courſe of life, and to " ſerve in the army together. My father " aſſented to our deſires: and in order to " qualify us properly for that ſchool of

" honour,

" honour, he ſent us to Paris, to finiſh our
" ſtudies, and to perfect ourſelves in the
" knowledge and uſe of arms. His ten-
" derneſs was never more viſible than in
" parting with us. Engaged by his buſi-
" neſs, he could not accompany us as he
" wiſhed to do. But he gave us a proof
" of his affection in the handſome allow-
" ance he made us, and which he continued
" chearfully to pay all the time we re-
" mained at Paris.

" We purſued our exerciſes with ala-
" crity: and I ſhall not deceive you if I tell
" you we were not the leaſt *adroit* in the
" academy. We met with applauſe, and
" formed ſome very happy and reputable
" connexions amongſt people of faſhion
" and quality. This was pleaſing to the va-
" nity of young men; nor was my father
" leſs rejoiced at the account he had re-
" ceived from his friends, of the careſſes
" that were laviſhed on his beloved chil-
" dren. As we were looked upon in the
" light

"light of young men of fortune, which "the figure we made induced every one to "believe, we were well received every "where. Monſieur Deſautier's family was "one of thoſe we viſited moſt frequently. "It conſiſted of himſelf, a wife, and an "only daughter, much about my brother's "age, or ſomewhat younger. Monſieur "Deſautier was very much eſteemed for "his many good qualities; and a place he "held at court having raiſed him above "the *bourgeois*, his houſe was the reſort of "many people of faſhion. Madame De-"ſautier rendered us many civilities, as "well as her huſband, and we always "found a cordial reception at her houſe. "That induced me to viſit her frequently, "but my brother had another cauſe. His "heart could not withſtand the charms of "the fair Agnes, their daughter. She was "really lovely, and poſſeſſed of a ſenſibility "that heightened her beauty; neither was "ſhe deficient in any of thoſe accompliſh-

"ments

"ments which belong to her ſex. His "young and unexperienced heart knew not "the dart it had received. But making "me his confidant, he acquainted me with "his ſentiments. Though I had not been "unhappy enough to ſigh for any woman, "yet I could tell him what was the matter "with him. He confeſſed it: but ſo great "was his diffidence, that he could not "venture to inform her of the effect of her "charms, till he had rendered her ſome "ſervice, or done ſomething that would "make him appear deſerving in her eyes. "While he heſitated in what manner to "act, we received a letter from my father, "expreſſing a deſire to ſee us, and com-"manding us to return to him directly. "My brother could not but obey this or-"der with reluctance, as it removed him "from the ſight of his miſtreſs. He would "have found ſome excuſe to ſtay behind, "if I had not perſuaded him to comply "with his father's requeſt. He made uſe

"of

"of the ſmall time that was left, and ac-
"quainted Madamoiſelle Deſautier with
"the paſſion he had conceived for her.
"She received it with politeneſs; and if
"her anſwer did not give him any hope,
"ſo it did not drive him to deſpair. She
"returned him thanks for the good opi-
"nion he had of her: that ſhe eſteemed
"herſelf much honoured by his addreſſes,
"but could not make any reply to them
"without her father's conſent, and that it
"would be improper to mention ſuch a
"thing then, as he was to leave France ſo
"ſoon. When he aſſured her that he
"would viſit Paris ſoon again, as nothing
"ſhould ſeparate them long: ſhe replied,
"that ſhe ſhould be always very glad to
"ſee him. Though this did not ſquare
"with his intentions, as he hoped to have
"prevailed on her to give a more favour-
"able anſwer; yet it was a great ſatis-
"faction to him to reflect that he had ac-
"quainted the lovely Agnes with his paſ-

"ſion. When we went to take our leaves
"of this family, though they all expreſſed
"a regret at our departure, yet I thought
"I ſaw in the eyes of Agnes, ſomething
"more than a common concern for our
"going away. It was more apparent when
"my brother went to ſalute her; and
"though his own agitations prevented his
"taking notice of the manner in which
"ſhe was affected, yet I, who was intereſted
"only upon his account, very plainly per-
"ceived that there was ſomething more
"than friendſhip that ſpoke in her actions.
"When I communicated theſe notions to
"him, they ſerved to ſweeten the bitterneſs
"of ſeparation, and elevate his mind with
"hope. Our reception at home was ſuch
"as might be expected from the tenderneſs
"and affection of our parents. They vied
"with each other in expreſſing their fond-
"neſs for us; and never could they hope
"for children, who more truly returned
"their love with the moſt filial duty. It

"was

"was ſome time after we arrived before my
"father told us that he had procured com-
"miſſions for us in the Hungarian ſervice,
"and as there were preparations on all ſides
"for war, that we ſhould have an oppor-
"tunity of ſignalizing ourſelves. The
"time came when we were to join our re-
"giment, for we had the happineſs to
"ſerve in the ſame *corps*, and again we
"were obliged to tear ourſelves from the
"arms of our parents, who felt a dou-
"ble reluctance in parting with us, as we
"now went to court honour in the midſt
"of danger. Nor was my father's gene-
"roſity leſs conſpicuous upon this occa-
"ſion than the former. His appointments
"diſplayed his care and love for us. As
"we had yet ſome time to ſpare, my bro-
"ther propoſed to return to Paris, to ſee
"his miſtreſs before he joined the army.
"I could refuſe nothing to him whom I
"ſo truly loved. The firſt place we went
"to was Monſieur Deſautier's. We were

" received in ſuch a manner as plainly " ſhewed the pleaſure they had in ſeeing us " again. As we had but a few days to ſtay " there, I recommended it to my brother to " uſe his time to the beſt advantage. He " took my advice, and the next time he " went to viſit his miſtreſs, her father ad- " dreſſed him in the preſence of his wife:

'We are not inſenſible, Mr. O Reilly,' ſaid he, 'of the honour you intend us, by 'paying your addreſſes to our daughter. 'She has informed us of the good opinion 'you have entertained for her; our affec- 'tion for her is ſo great, and indeed, tho' 'ſhe is my daughter, I muſt ſay her pru- 'dence and good qualities merit all the 'confidence we can repoſe in her, that we 'have permitted her to act according to her 'own inclinations, without interfering in 'the matter, equally relying upon her good 'conduct, and your honour. However, I 'hope you will not be offended with me, 'when I mention, that as you are now ſet-

'ting

'ting out in the purſuit of glory, I ſhould 'be ſorry you ſuffered your ardor to be 'damped by your regard for Agnes: make 'your campaign; at your return I ſhall be 'glad to ſee you, and aſſure yourſelf that 'our beſt wiſhes and conſtant prayers ſhall 'be offered up for your preſervation.'

"They left him alone with his miſtreſs, "and he had the happineſs to receive ſome "proofs that he was not indifferent to her. "Before his departure he had reaſon to "think that he had inſpired her with a "mutual paſſion. The thought made him "happy; and he ſet out with an alacrity, "and a deſire of rendering himſelf worthy "of the beautiful Agnes, by doing ſome-"thing remarkable. By the letters of re-"commendation, which my father's care "and intereſt had procured for us, we "found ourſelves extremely well received "in the army; and at this time, the "laſt war which engaged all the powers "of the North, was juſt breaking out.

"I will not take up your time, or exhauſt
"your patience in relating the actions we
"were concerned in, nor the different ſuc-
"ceſſes of them. I ſhall not exaggerate
"when I tell you, that we were not the
"leaſt remarkable in the corps to which
"we belonged, and our conduct recom-
"mended us to the notice of General
"Brown, who commanded that part of
"the troops where we ſerved. In about
"three years we were promoted to the
"rank of Captain; and our ambition and
"thirſt of glory were agreeably gratified.
"At the end of the firſt campaign, when
"the troops retired into winter quarters,
"my brother obtained leave to go to Paris.
"He took the opportunity of accompany-
"ing ſome French gentlemen, who had
"ſerved as volunteers in our corps, and
"were returning home. His reputation
"was gone before him, and he found him-
"ſelf loaded with praiſes and compliments.
"But he received the moſt ſolid pleaſure
"from

" from the ſight and kindneſs of his dear
" Agnes. In her ſmiles he reaped the re-
" ward of all his toils. The proofs he re-
" ceived of her regard, were ſuch as left
" him no doubt but that he had inſpired
" her with the tender paſſion, which ſhe did
" not deſire to conceal; but ſhe conſtantly
" refuſed to marry him, and had ſome ob-
" jection ready whenever he propoſed to
" be united to her. This conduct alarmed
" and grieved him, and before he had time
" to remove theſe objections, he was obliged
" to return to the ſervice. To the letters
" which he wrote during the campaign, he
" received anſwers which gave him the
" moſt flattering aſſurances of her regard;
" and when the winter came, he again re-
" turned to lay the laurels he had gathered
" at her feet. Some wounds he had received
" in the courſe of the ſervice, which, though
" not dangerous, occaſioned his obtaining
" leave to ſtay longer than ordinary, for
" the recovery of his health. Then it was

" that he firſt learned his amiable miſtreſs's
" delicacy of ſentiment, and found the
" cauſe why ſhe refuſed to marry him.

'My whole dependance at preſent,' ſaid this generous girl, 'is on my Father: 'his principal fortune is the place he 'enjoys; the money he expended in the 'purchaſe of it was almoſt his all. You 'are a man of fortune, your expectati-'ons from your friends are very great; 'you are riſing in the world, and I ſhall 'only be a clog that will prevent your 'preferment. Ceaſe to love me, forget 'there was ever ſuch a one in being; 'purſue your genius, that will not for-'ſake you. I cannot think of being an 'interruption to your advancement in 'life; I regard you too much. Beſides, 'what will your family ſay, when they 'find you have married a girl who had 'nothing more than a few perſonal ac-'compliſhments, and a tolerable hand-'ſome face, which three or four years

'will

'will alter? No, no, my dear O Reilly,
'I will not prejudice you ſo much, as
'to conſent to your wiſhes, and help to
'ruin your fortune. Think no more of
'me.'

"Her lover was ſtruck dumb at this
"addreſs; nothing could be more un-
"expected or grievous to him. He uſed
"every argument that his affection could
"ſuggeſt to make her alter her reſolu-
"tion. Poſſeſſed of as much generoſity
"as ſhe was, he aſſured her that he
"ſhould think himſelf truly happy, in
"having an opportunity of beſtowing
"wealth upon her, the only thing which
"the partiality of fortune had deprived
"her off: he promiſed her, from the
"knowledge he had of the tenderneſs and
"love of his father and mother, that they
"would be very well pleaſed with his
"marrying according to his inclination.
"He uſed every argument that love or
"gratitude could ſupply him with, but

" all in vain; the fair Agnes remained
" firm, and her reſolution was not to
" be ſhaken. This behaviour only ſerved
" to augment the vehemence of his paſ-
" ſion: he found that the object of his
" affections deſerved admiration, as well
" for the generoſity and delicacy of her
" ſentiments, as the beauties of her per-
" ſon. Though he had not the power
" to make her alter her intentions, or
" to favour him in the manner he wiſhed,
" yet an opportunity offered itſelf, that
" ſerved to convince Madamoiſelle Deſau-
" tier, that his paſſion was equally pure
" and diſintereſted. The young Count
" Bourvallais ſerved in the ſame corps with
" us: there had ever been a very great
" intimacy ſubſiſting between him and
" my brother: their amuſements, and
" their pleaſures were mutual. The
" Count poſſeſſed great vivacity, and was
" fond of ſignalizing himſelf upon all
" occaſions. He had engaged himſelf one
" day

"day among the enemy, and was in the "utmoſt danger. My brother, though he "had admoniſhed him to temper his cou- "rage with moderation, could not re- "ſtrain his ardour. There was the great- "eſt probability that the Count would "either be killed or made priſoner. The "utmoſt danger attended the attempt to "relieve him, but his friend undertook "and happily accompliſhed his delivery. "He had received ſome wounds, which "were ſoon cured; and his gratitude to "my brother for ſo gallantly reſcuing "him, was inexpreſſible. They went to "Paris together, and he introduced his "friend to his family, who were of the "firſt quality: they loaded him with "praiſes and careſſes. His gallantry and "conduct were inexhauſtible themes of "applauſe. The ſiſter of the Count "was younger than him by a year; ſhe "had been obliged by parental autho- "rity to marry the Marquis De Lude.

" He was old and ugly, but he was rich:
" her heart had never conceived a ten-
" der ſentiment for him, nor was ſhe
" much grieved when he died, and ſhe
" found herſelf once more at liberty, and
" miſtreſs of a conſiderable fortune, which
" the fondneſs of her huſband beſtowed
" on her. The praiſes which were uni-
" verſally given to my brother, the ſer-
" vice he had rendered to the Count
" her brother, and above all my bro-
" ther's perſonal qualifications, for he was
" allowed to be very handſome, had a
" very great effect upon her. She ſaw
" and loved him. The Marchioneſs was
" young, rich and charming; of a noble
" family, and offered every thing that
" could tempt a young man's ambition.
" The preference ſhe gave him in the
" preſence of many other lovers, and the
" particularities ſhe treated him with, diſ-
" covered the ſecret of her heart. Her
" brother aſked her concerning it, and ſhe
" did

"did not heſitate to acknowledge that
"ſhe never ſaw a man whom ſhe ſhould
"chuſe to be united to ſo ſoon as Mr.
"O Reilly. The Count, who doubted
"not of his friend's acceptance of ſuch
"an offer, and that he would be rejoiced
"at the poſſeſſion of a Lady, whom ſo
"many men of rank and fortune ſighed
"in vain for, was happy in the thoughts
"of his being bound ſtill cloſer to him by
"the ties of marriage. He repaired to
"my brother, and in the moſt friendly
"and delicate manner diſcloſed the re-
"gard his ſiſter had entertained for him.
"My brother, who had not the leaſt ſuſ-
"picion of any ſuch thing, was aſtoniſhed:
"his heart was too much attached to
"his beloved Agnes, to ſuffer him to
"think of any other woman. He de-
"clined the Count's generous propoſal
"in the leaſt offenſive manner, and, to
"aſſign a cauſe why he refuſed ſo ad-
"vantageous a match and alliance in a
"family

" family ſo much ſuperior to his own,
" he confeſſed an attachment to another;
" and though he did not diſcloſe her
" name, he related the whole affair to
" the Count. Though he was extreme-
" ly diſappointed at the ill ſucceſs he
" met, he could not help applauding
" my brother's fidelity; and hoping to re-
" tain his friendſhip, he left him to let
" his ſiſter know that ſhe had miſplaced
" her affections, and to deſire her to
" drop ſo fruitleſs a paſſion. Every thing
" is known at Paris: and by what-
" ever means this adventure took wind,
" it reached Madamoiſelle Deſautier."

'Why are you ſo blind', ſaid ſhe to him one evening when they were alone together, 'why do you not embrace the 'fortune that is preſenting itſelf to you? 'The Marchioneſs is fond of you: the 'whole city is acquainted with her paſ- 'ſion. She is a fine woman: ſhe has 'wealth and intereſt to promote you.

" Why

'Why are you deaf to the ſuggeſtions 'of your good fortune; receive her with 'open arms, for ſhe ſeldom courts a man 'but once.'

"What do you adviſe me to, cruel "Agnes! Is it not enough for me to "ſuffer from your inſenſibility, but you "would have me make another as wretched "as I am myſelf. I can love no other per- "ſon: and if I can never obtain your "conſent to be united to me, I will pre- "ſerve this heart for you alone, nor ſhall "I be outdone by you in generoſity."

"In this manner was the conteſt car- "ried on between them: and though ſhe "confeſſed her regard for him, he could "not prevail on her to become his wife, "while his fortune was ſo much ſupe- "rior to hers. He had not been able "to move her reſolutions, when the "ſpring called him from the arms of "love. You will perhaps want to know "if my heart was untouched: I can

"aſſure

"assure you it was, and reserved for "a more cruel fate. My amours were "those of a soldier, who finds a mistress "in every town. It was during this "third campaign, that we were promoted "to the rank of Captain; and in the "next year I had a Majority conferred "on me. With various successes, too te-"dious to relate, we served that war: "and when the negotiations for peace "commenced, as my father expressed a "great desire to see us, we returned to "Ireland, and met with that affection "and fondness in our parents which we "always experienced, and which had so "truly endeared them to us. It was, "during this visit, that my heart was "first susceptible of the tender passion. "Miss Mac Carthy was the most lovely "woman I had ever seen. Our respective "families were on a very intimate footing: "and her father, who was a man of proper-"ty, was able to give her a very considera-

"ble

" ble fortune. As I was held in a reſpec-
" table light, my addreſſes to her were not
" diſpleaſing to her father; and I had the
" great happineſs to find they were not un-
" acceptable to her. My brother, who
" could not live without his dear Agnes,
" went to Paris, authorized by the conſent
" of his father, to demand her in mar-
" riage. He had no longer any doubts of
" obtaining her conſent to become his wife.
" He flew to her feet to communicate his
" intelligence, which he hoped would re-
" move all her objections: but he found
" himſelf again diſappointed. While he
" paſſed his time in deſpair at her cruelty,
" I was happier with my miſtreſs, who ac-
" knowledged a mutual paſſion for me;
" and when I preſſed her to gratify it, by
" becoming united to me, ſhe aſſured me
" ſhe had no other objection, but that of our
" not being long enough known to each
" other, and that ſhe could not think of
" doing things in ſuch an hurry. I com-

" bated,

" bated, and overcome her ſcruples, and a
" day was fixed for our union, though
" much more diſtant than I could have
" wiſhed. The old gentlemen ſettled the
" terms between themſelves, and I receiv-
" ed proofs every day of the affection
" which this charming girl had conceived
" for me: But an accident prevented our
" completing our happineſs. The bellige-
" rant powers could not rely upon one
" another; and though there was every
" proſpect of peace, yet the fear of each
" other cauſed them to maintain the ſame
" appearances of hoſtility as if they were
" in arms. In the ſpring of the year I re-
" ceived an order to join my regiment by a
" particular day, and I found I could ne-
" ver comply with this order if there was
" any delay on my ſide. Shame and ho-
" nour forbad my abſenting myſelf from
" my duty: and as I hoped this ſepa-
" ration from all I held dear would not be
" of long continuance, I prepared for my
" departure.

"departure. Nothing could be more tender
"than Miſs Mac Carthy's behaviour at our
"parting: ſhe wept, and gave me num-
"berleſs inſtances of her affection: we vowed
"an unalterable love and inviolable fidelity
"to each other: and I could not entertain
"the leaſt doubt of my being as dear to
"her, as I could wiſh to be. The ſcene
"of ſeparation from my father was no leſs
"affecting. My mother could hardly ſup-
"port it, and with difficulty I forced my-
"ſelf away from their embraces. When
"I arrived at the army I found my bro-
"ther, who gave me an account of his
"ill ſucceſs, and that he was hopeleſs of
"ever perſuading the fair Agnes to gratify
"his paſſion. Whilſt I, on the contrary,
"was happy in the thoughts of my miſ-
"treſs's fidelity and affection. Though
"there were no offenſive operations carri-
"ed on by either party, yet it was neceſſa-
"ry we ſhould remain in a poſture of de-
"fence; and we had all the appearance
"of war, though a peace was negotiating

"at

" at that very moment. We had been
" near ſeven months abſent, when the for-
" tune, which had attended us all our lives,
" began to change; and we were once more
" doomed to taſte the bitterneſs of poverty
" and misfortune. A letter reached us
" from a friend, informing us, that our
" mother was dead; and that our father,
" who ſurvived her but two months, was
" alſo dead, and had made an extraordina-
" ry alteration in his will, and inſtead of
" leaving us the fortune we had been ever
" taught to hope and expect, he had cut
" us off with an inconſiderable legacy,
" and a ſmall annuity apiece for the re-
" mainder of our lives; and had left the
" bulk of his wealth to another branch
" of the family. He recommended to us
" to return home as ſoon as we poſſibly
" could, and take care of our intereſts;
" for though the cauſe was not public
" why he made ſo great an alteration, yet
" it was ſuppoſed he had ſome reaſon

for

" for it: but that it was the advice and " opinion of all our friends, that we " ſhould endeavour to ſet the will aſide " which was ſo directly oppoſite to his " own conſtant declaration in our favour, " and his remarkable fondneſs for us dur- " ing his life. This account overwhelm- " ed us with grief. The loſs of parents, " who were ſo juſtly dear to us, was alone " ſufficient to have filled us with affliction; " but it ſerved to encreaſe it when we re- " flected, that we were at once cut off from " thoſe golden hopes which we had ſo long " indulged, and that we were left without " that fortune we had been always taught " to expect. This made us conclude, that " ſome ſiniſter means had been uſed to baf- " fle us of our rights, which we were de- " termined, at the hazard of every thing " that remained, to find out if we could. " As the peace was concluded, we eaſily " obtained permiſſion to go and look after " our affairs. When we arrived in Dublin,

" we

" we learned what ſurpriſed us more than
" any thing that had before happened.
" Thus we were informed of it, that my
" mother, as we always thought her to be,
" being taken exceedingly ill, and given
" over by her phyſicians, confeſſed to the
" prieſt who attended her in her dying
" moments to adminiſter the laſt ſacrament
" of our church to her, that we were not
" her ſons, but the children of her ſiſter,
" who had been married to a poor man,
" who had a large family, and was ſcarce-
" ly able to maintain them; that ſhe
" having no children, or likely to have
" any, and her huſband having reproach-
" ed her for her barrenneſs, ſhe prevailed
" upon her ſiſter to let her have two of her
" children, juſt as they were born, and
" that they might paſs for her's, in order
" to retain the affections of her huſband.
" She related, at length, the contrivances
" and ſchemes ſhe made uſe of to impoſe
" on him, and the ſucceſs ſhe met with;
" but

"but that she could no longer conceal a "circumstance of this importance, and "was obliged to confess it. The priest, "who had been long acquainted with "our family, was astonished at this rela-"tion. He interrogated his penitent; "and still she adhered to her declara-"tion, that we were not her children. "A secret, which concerned the wel-"fare of the whole family, was of too "great consequence to my father and his "relations to keep it concealed; and when "she desired absolution, the priest told her, "that he was much surprised with what "he had heard, and was very sorry for it; "that she had been very criminal in de-"ceiving her husband, and carrying on the "imposition so long; that she knew very "well he dared not reveal any secrets that "were communicated to him in confession; "and that therefore it must remain in ob-"livion for ever, if he did not make use of "some means to disclose it; adding, that

" if he ſhould attempt to ſay ſuch a thing
" after ſhe was dead, nobody would give
" any credit to him, and he would be
" treated as a knave and an impoſtor: he
" therefore made it the poſitive, and the
" only condition of his granting her abſolu-
" tion, that ſhe ſhould make an open and
" voluntary acknowledgement of this af-
" fair to her huſband, and relate the facts
" as ſhe had ſtated them in her confeſſion
" to him. Though it was extremely diſa-
" greeable to her to make known to her
" huſband how ſhe had impoſed upon
" him for ſo long a time; yet as ſhe could
" not obtain abſolution, nor would the
" prieſt adminiſter the extreme unction to
" her till ſhe did, ſhe found herſelf oblig-
" ed to unfold the whole affair, however
" great the repugnance was that ſhe had
" to it. Nothing could equal the ſurpriſe
" and aſtoniſhment of her huſband when
" the matter was broke to him. He went
" up to her room attended by witneſſes,
" and ſhe recapitulated every thing that
" ſhe

"ſhe had before told the prieſt. She then "entreated his pardon for impoſing upon "him, and hoped he would forgive her. "It was no eaſy matter to perſuade him to "it; for, diſappointed as he was in the no-"tion of our being his children, he could "not look upon his dying wife without "reſentment: however, the perſuaſions "and authority of his ſpiritual director "prevailed, and he forgave her. She died "ſoon after. This diſcovery affected her "huſband greatly. As we had been the "pride of his heart, and he had ever loved "us as his own children, it gave him great "uneaſineſs, and occaſioned him much "mortification to think how he had been "deceived. He concealed this affair for "his own ſake; and, reſolving to deprive "us of the fortune he acquired, he pu-"niſhed us for the fault of his wife. He "ſurvived her but two months, and in that "time altered his will. He left us two "hundred pounds apiece, and an annuity

" of ſixty pounds a year each for life. As
" his effects were ſuppoſed to be worth
" above twenty thouſand pounds, we
" could not put up with the legacy he had
" left us: we were therefore adviſed to li-
" tigate the validity of the will, and try to
" recover our father's fortune. There were
" many improbable circumſtances in this re-
" lation of my ſuppoſed mother's; and
" every body acknowledged them as ſuch.
" There were no legal proofs to ſupport
" her aſſertions; and her ſtory only had
" weight with my father, and regulated
" him in the diſpoſition of his fortune.
" The ſiſter and her huſband had been long
" dead; her whole family extinct, or ſo
" ſcattered, that there was no poſſibility
" of finding them out; and their poverty
" and ſituation in life had placed them be-
" neath notice. We commenced a ſuit,
" and puſhed it on with great ardour for
" the recovery of a property which we
" had ever conſidered as our right. The
" loſs

"loſs of this fortune was not the only "mortification I met with, for I found "Miſs Mac Carthy and her family no more "regarded me in the affectionate manner as "formerly: they were civil, but ſhe would "never give me an opportunity of enter-"taining her on the ſubject neareſt my "heart. The expence of the ſuit, and "other things conſumed our money. In "conſideration of our behaviour we were "permitted to ſell our commiſſions, and "quit the ſervice we had been ſo long in. "We were induced to take this ſtep, which, "perhaps, you may think impolitic and "imprudent, becauſe, by preſerving our "commiſſions, we might have made our "annuities have ſupported us: but the "Germans and Hungarians are very ſtrict "with regard to birth and family. The "number of our countrymen in the ſer-"vice would ſoon ſpread the ſtory of our "misfortune, which was too remarkable

" to be concealed long; and if we had been
" ſuſpected of a mean or obſcure birth, we
" ſhould have been deſpiſed and neglected
" by the officers: a circumſtance that nei-
" ther of us could think of ſupporting.
" The money ariſing from this ſale helped
" to carry on our ſuit; but whether it was
" from the inability of our lawyers, or
" what other cauſe I know not, we were
" caſt, and obliged to be contented with
" what had been bequeathed to us. One
" circumſtance, however, afforded us ſome
" ſatisfaction, that although we were not
" allowed to be the children of the per-
" ſons whom we ever ſuppoſed to be our
" parents, yet there was nothing objected
" to the legitimacy of our births; and tho'
" we knew not, nor were ever acquainted
" with our parents, yet we found that we
" were not the iſſue of any criminal amour.
" A ſuit ſo remarkable as ours was, or the
" event of it, could not be long concealed
" from the inquiſitive world. There were

" many

"many things which ſpoke loudly in our "favour; but all the ſervice they did us was "to excite the pity of our friends. We were "now thrown from that elevated ſphere we "had all along moved in, and were oblig- "ed to turn our thoughts to more hum- "ble ſchemes of life than we had before "thought of. In the midſt of theſe trou- "bles, however, I concluded that Miſs "Mac Carthy's fortune would contribute "to the re-eſtabliſhment of my affairs, "and that through her means I might be "able to procure employment in ſome fo- "reign ſervice. I had ſtill hopes of "her fidelity and regard for me, and "reckoned myſelf pretty ſure that I "ſhould find a refuge in her arms from "the ſtorms of life. A few days ſerved "to undeceive me. So far from having "the leaſt compaſſion for my misfortunes, "or affection for my perſon, the firſt time "I waited on her after the diſaſtrous event "of our ſuit, ſhe told me, with a perfect

" *ſang froid*, that as matters were extreme-
" ly altered ſince I had firſt done her the
" honour of paying my addreſſes to her,
" I could not take it amiſs if ſhe complied
" with the deſires of her father in requeſt-
" ing me to give over all thoughts of her,
" as it would now be impoſſible for us
" to be united; for that reaſon ſhe hoped
" I would think no more of her. I did
" not reproach her, for my tongue was
" tied up by ſurpriſe and reſentment. She
" ſaw rage in my eyes, and choſe to avoid
" the ſtorm by retiring. She courteſied
" and left me to myſelf, before I had re-
" collection enough to upbraid her with her
" perfidy. I could not vent my anger
" upon bare walls, and I fled with preci-
" pitation from an houſe which contained
" ſuch a woman. I poured forth my com-
" plaints to my brother, who endeavoured
" to conſole me. It was in vain. The
" hopes of her love rouſed up my ſpirits,
" and ſerved to prevent their ſinking in the

" ſea

"ſea of trouble that encompaſſed me on
"every ſide. That hope was now loſt, and
"I was abandoned to deſpair. My bro-
"ther was employing himſelf in writing
"to his Miſtreſs to inform her of the me-
"lancholy alteration of his affairs, ac-
"quainting her that he would now be as
"generous as ſhe had been, and forbear
"entailing misfortune and want upon her.
"Her anſwer was ſuch as he had no rea-
"ſon to expect, if he meaſured all women
"by the ſtandard of my miſtreſs. I ſhall
"never forget it: for the ſhortneſs of it,
"and the great contraſt between her be-
"haviour and that of Miſs Mac Carthy,
"ſerved to fix it more ſtrongly than
"ever in my memory. This is the tranſ-
"lation of it.

'If it was not for the trouble you endure
'at this diſagreeable change in your affairs,
'the contents of your letter would not give
'me the leaſt pain. It is now my turn,

'my dear O Reilly, to become a ſuiter to
'you. Stay no longer in Ireland indulg-
'ing your chagrin and grief. Come to Pa-
'ris. I will now comply with every re-
'queſt you can make to me. You have
'enough ſtill remaining to live on. I am
'ready to ſhare your fate. My father has
'intereſt enough to procure you a poſt in
'the army, and perhaps reſtore you to
'your rank. I conjure you not to delay.
'I die with impatience to ſee you. Come
'then, and let me endeavour to conſole you
'on your misfortunes. Come and forget
'them with your affectionate,

'AGNES.'

"My brother's delicacy was ſo great at
"firſt, that he heſitated whether he ſhould
"comply with this generous girl's invitati-
"on. However, his love and my perſuaſions
"prevailed, and he ſet out to enjoy happi-
"neſs with his beloved miſtreſs. He eſ-
"caped by that means many mortifications

"that

"that the change of my circumſtances
"ſubjected me to. Thoſe whom I ima-
"gined to be my friends, no longer even
"wore that appearance when I was dif-
"ferent from the man of fortune they
"ſuppoſed me. I met coldneſs, ſlights,
"and contempt in almoſt every face. The
"alteration was too great for me to ſup-
"port, and I reſolved to ſeek ſome refuge
"in a place where I was a ſtranger. I
"pitched upon England, and here I have
"lived near four years. The moſt frugal
"œconomy is only capable of enabling
"me to ſubſiſt upon my little ſtipend.
"This, Mr. Benſon, is the exact detail of
"my affairs: and from the experience I
"have of the world, and knowing how
"much a man labouring under the preſ-
"ſure of poverty and affliction is ſlighted
"and deſpiſed, you may be able to judge
"of the good opinion I have of you, when
"I thus make you maſter of the hiſtory
"of my life. I believe you to be a man

" of a more liberal way of thinking, and a " better heart, than to deſpiſe a man be- " cauſe he is poor and unfortunate."

Thus he ended his narration: and I aſſured him that my friendſhip and regard for him ſhould rather be encreaſed than diminiſhed by the account he gave me. I pitied him ſincerely, and took an intereſt in his misfortunes. I will endeavour to make his ſituation more comfortable than it is at preſent, whenever I am able. Our converſation turned on ſome of the events of his ſtory.

" You have ſuffered by the infidelity of " one woman, but your brother has been " made happy by the generoſity and affec- " tion of his Agnes; that ſhould prevent " your entertaining ſo bad an opinion of " the fair ſex."

" Ah," replied he, " among five hun- " dred women, you will find but one " Agnes. Every day I live confirms me " more

"more and more in the juſtice and truth
"of the opinions I have embraced. If you
"would be happy, my dear Benſon, place
"not your felicity upon women. I re-
"member a proverb, which was, as the
"told me, a favourite among the Turks,
"and ſeems to confirm my notions.—
'Four things ſhould never flatter us—
'Familiarity with princes; the careſſes
'of women; the ſmiles of our enemies;
'nor a warm day in winter; for theſe
'things are not of a long duration.'

"My brother and his wife have ſent me
"frequent invitations to live with them.
"He has forgotten all his griefs; all his
"woes are buried in the arms of his dear
"Agnes: but I cannot go near him, for
"the remembrance of the woman who had
"treated me ſo ill, would affect me too
"ſtrongly, if I was to ſee that Agnes,
"who acted ſo contrary."

I have now informed you of O Reilly's ſtory, for which I had his permiſſion; and

which perhaps may afford you ſome amuſement. Thus I divert the hours, the tedious hours that intervene, till I ſhall ſee Matilda again. The family of Greenhill-Park are not yet removed to London, and I am obliged to be extremely circumſpect, leſt any diſcovery ſhould be made prejudicial to her reputation whom I ſo truly love. Her letter is the greateſt conſolation I have: and while it augments my reſentment againſt Lord Averſton, it increaſes my affection for her. This gives me ſome hope that I am not indifferent to her, but in what a manner does ſhe diſcloſe it! I have not been able yet to perſuade her to permit even the ſmalleſt familiarities: never could prevail on her to deviate, in the ſmalleſt degree, from the line of ſtrict reſerve. The acknowledgement of ſuch a weakneſs is a triumph ſhe will not ſuffer me to have over her. Yet this behaviour, though it does not gratify the ardor of my paſſion, convinces my reaſon, and ſatisfies my judgment.

ment. I blame myſelf for complaining of her coldneſs, which I connot help applauding. The propriety of her conduct is ſuch, that by ſtarving my love, ſhe encreaſes my deſire; and by preſerving her dignity, ſhe merits admiration. It is in vain to talk of the foibles of the ſex, I can ſee none in Matilda: and would ſhe but condeſcend to return my paſſion, ſhe would be the moſt perfect of women.

Yours truly,

GEORGE BENSON.

LETTER LXXIII.

To GEORGE BENSON, Eſq.

THY not writing in anſwer to ſeveral letters I ſent you, ſurprizes me. You are either too happy to think of ſending me an epiſtle, or may be ſo much in the dumps, that you have not ſpirits to put pen to paper—or, perhaps, you are too buſy.

What

Whatever may be the occaſion, I am very ready to excuſe it, ſo you will write to me at any time hereafter. This little girl runs between me and every thing elſe. I have no thoughts but of her and for her. Were ſhe not to be the ſubject of this letter, I doubt whether I ſhould have any inclination to begin it. I know you will laugh at me, as you generally do, whenever I am diſappointed in any of my favourite ſchemes. You muſt laugh on: and though I expect neither pity nor conſolation from you, yet I muſt communicate every thing that befalls me. I think I have been ſomething above a month, trying every means that fortune and opportunity have put into my power, and I am as far from ſubduing the ſtubborn heart of this little devil as ever. I am not accuſtomed to be thus baffled, and can leſs patiently bear it. But all the airs of virtue ſit ſo eaſy upon her, that one would be apt to imagine they were really true. Yet I cannot agree to that,

that, for ſhe could not be ſo quiet and compoſed in a houſe where ſhe muſt perceive ſomething extraordinary, if ſhe was not one of the tribe herſelf. Mrs. Lewis takes a great deal of pains to preſerve appearances. I am quite at a loſs what to think of her. Every thing I have yet attempted has been unſucceſsful. Mrs. Lewis aſſures me I am miſtaken in her, but ſhe will not give me an account how ſhe came acquainted with her, or where ſhe met with her. This confirms my ſuſpicions, while it encreaſes my ſurprize at her behaviour. We are upon a very intimate footing; we laugh, we toy, we chat together in a very familiar ſtrain. But there is ſomething ſo innocent and artleſs in her manner, that makes me aſhamed of the bad opinion I have conceived of her. There is alſo a peculiar neatneſs and elegance in her dreſs and perſon, as foreign from thoſe artifices which our modern *filles de joye* practiſe, as can be. I would take

take a very ſummary method of being aſſured of the truth of the matter, if I was not afraid of offending her, and loſing that place in her eſteem which I at preſent enjoy. I have thrown out a great many hints in my converſation, which ſhe does not, or will not underſtand; and her replies to them have been ſuch as almoſt convince me I wrong her. Thus thought I, when I determined to know the truth of the matter; and fortified with as much burgundy as was neceſſary to drown all the modeſty and diffidence in my compoſition, I repaired to Mrs. Lewis's. She was fortunately indiſpoſed, and kept her chamber. The lovely Polly Whately was alone, and at work, when I entered the parlour.

"You'l ſpoil your eyes, child, if you are "always thus poring over work."

"I cannot employ them better."

"Oh, you miſtake child. There are "a thouſand ways of employing them "much more to the purpoſe. For inſtance

"ſtance, now—look at me?—that ſmile "makes my heart rebound with joy. It "inſpires me with the moſt elevated "thoughts, the moſt charming ideas. Is "it not aſhame for you to throw away "thoſe looks upon ſuch an uſeleſs em-"ployment as you are now at, when "they are capable of ſuch glorious ef-"fects?"

"I fancy they are indebted for all "their power, to the ſprightlineſs of "your imagination, and the wine you "have been drinking."

"No, no, when I am perfectly ſober, "I have the ſame opinion of them: but "I confeſs that a little wine does the "cauſe no hurt, I think they look brigh-"ter, and am ſure have a greater effect "on me.

"Love's dart dipp'd in wine, he wounds be-
"yond curing,
"And the liquor, like oil, makes the flame
"more enduring."

She

She laughed at my application.

"The ſight may be good, my char-
"mer," ſaid I; "but the taſte muſt be
"much better."

A little ſtruggle obtained ſome kiſſes from her. This freedom did not damp my deſign. Our converſation was very ſprightly, and I proceeded to ſome liberties ſhe did not like. She remonſtrated againſt them with a great deal of temper and good humour, willing to attribute the freedoms I took, to the liquor I had drank. This appeared to me the favourable moment, and I determined to puſh it.

"I thought, I had to deal with a gen-
"tleman," ſaid ſhe in a rage; "but I find
"you are a ruffian."

She was going away, but I held her faſt.

"Stay a little longer my ſweet Polly,
"and hear a few words, but a few.
"This anger becomes you wonderouſly;
"but

"but upon my ſoul it is very unreaſon-
"able and ridiculous. I underſtand it
"perfectly well, and I will fall into the
"trap you have laid for me. You ſhall have
"more than I would give any body elſe.
"Name your terms, and if they are not
"confoundedly unreaſonable I will comply
"with them;—and now my dear you
"may be able to determine whether I am
"a gentleman or no."

"I know not either what yon mean
"or what you ſay, Sir. I want to pro-
"poſe no terms: all I have to requeſt is,
"that you would let me go; for I am
"not accuſtomed to be treated in this
"manner, and your detaining me here
"againſt my inclination, does not ſhew
"much of the gentleman."

"I can't let you go yet."

"Ill raiſe the houſe with my cries if
"you don't. Mrs. Lewis will not fail
"to releaſe me from you."

"Mrs.

"Mrs. Lewis, my dear, is a woman "of too much ſenſe, to diſturb herſelf "about trifles. What ſignifies making "a myſtery of the matter any longer. "You muſt be ſenſible child, that I "know you to be *one of us*, and that I "have behaved to you in the moſt ge- "nerous manner: now if you have a "friend of your own, I have done; if "not, I do not ſee why I am not at "liberty to offer myſelf."

"I believe Sir, you are miſtaken: and "though I cannot account for your be- "haviour this evening, but from your "intoxication, I ſhall take care how I "render myſelf liable to be affronted for "the future. I beg, Sir, you will per- "mit me to go."

"Why, do you know where you are, "my dear?"

"I do not care where I am, ſo it be "not in a place where I am liable to "receive ſuch inſults."

"Such

"Sleep upon it, my dear Polly, and "to-morrow I will come to know your "determination; perhaps your mind "may change before the morning."

As ſoon as I gave her liberty, ſhe made uſe of it, and ran away as faſt as ſhe could: and as I had no buſineſs there any longer, I took my departure alſo. I was now in a more doubtful ſtate than before, for this laſt repulſe convinced me that intereſt was not her view or deſign. How to think that ſhe was really a woman of virtue I knew not. Great a raſcal as I am, Benſon, yet I pay that reſpect to woman of modeſty which is their due, and which they demand from the greateſt libertines. I knew not what to do with myſelf, was aſhamed of being repulſed, and the charms of the dear little girl were uppermoſt in my imagination. I went to the St. James's, and I found no body there that I was intimate enough with

with to make one in a ſnug party, ſo I ſtrolled by myſelf to one of the receptacles for the kind and fair. I had gained an admiſſion into it, and was proceeding onwards, when I heard an exclamation—

"Oh, heaven's Hilgrove!"

As this was uttered with a mournful tone of voice, and expreſſive of diſtreſs, I haſtily turned about to ſee from whence it came; a woman was ſenſeleſs, in the arms of ſome others who were ſupporting her, and endeavouring to recall her to life again. She fainted, they informed me, at the ſight of me. I approached her: but what from the paleneſs occaſioned by her ſwooning, and alteration of her features, I could not recollect her. It was not long before ſhe was recovered: and the moment ſhe opened her eyes, I knew her to be the appothecary's daughter, whom you may remember I informed you I

I had a little affair with laſt year. I was much aſtoniſhed to ſee her there, and in ſuch a bad condition: but ordering a private room, I led her up ſtairs to enjoy an uninterrupted converſation; for I was very deſirous to learn how ſhe came to London, and by what means I found her in that houſe. I propoſed my doubts to her, but ſhe anſwered them only by her tears: for a long time I could obtain no other ſatisfaction. At length her paſſion ſubſided a little, and ſhe ſpoke.

"Can you wonder I am thus affected, "when I behold the author of all my "miſeries? can you be ſurpriſed at "my ſhedding tears, when I reflect on "what is paſt? 'Tis true that my own "folly and vanity conſpired to undo me; "but I had not fallen if you had not thrown "temptations in my way. Yes, Sir, "you are the cauſe of my being expoſed to "ſhame,

" ſhame, to want, to proſtitution, and infa-
" my!"

This addreſs ſtruck me forcibly; for though I am a ſad unthinking fellow, I would not do any thing baſe or bad.

" You have not only deprived *me* of hap-
" pineſs and peace; but you have alſo been
" the means of ruining the wretched man
" to whom I was married, and who
" thought much better of me than I de-
" ſerved."

" Theſe are extraordinary and unex-
" pected reproaches," ſaid I; " but tell me
" how I have merited them."

" I can do that very well," replied ſhe;
" though you may forget the many ſteps
" you took to effect my ruin, I can-
" not."

" I do not—Yet I remember you made
" me happy in your regard for me."

" Call it miſerable, call it wretched
" if you have any compaſſion for me,
" or any ſenſe of the wrongs you have
" done

"done me. Nay, for your own ſake,
"and to avoid the reproaches of your
"conſcience, which will not fail to up-
"braid you with my ruin, you ſhould
"reflect with horror and ſhame on your
"own conduct. The firſt ſtep once
"taken, the road to deſtruction becomes
"eaſy and familiar. It is all down hill,
"and ſoon you attain the depth of in-
"famy. You taught me to diſpiſe my
"huſband, to ſpurn the advice of my
"friends, to violate my marriage vow,
"and polute that bed I ſhould have ex-
"poſed my life to preſerve pure and unde-
"filed. My misfortunes have taught
"me my duty, which you made me for-
"ſake. You left me after you had ob-
"tained all it was in my power to beſtow
"on you. I ought to have been deſerted
"by every body, when I was no longer
"poſſeſſed of that innocence which ſhould
"render me eſtimable. A young man
"that my huſband had in the ſhop caſt

" the eyes of deſire on me. He had
" obſerved my criminality with you, and
" took an opportunity of letting me
" know that he was acquainted with my
" proceedings, informing me at the ſame
" time that, letting him ſhare with you
" in my affections, was the only means
" of bribing him to ſecreſy; what in-
" clination firſt tempted me to commit,
" fear made me repeat. We continued
" our intercourſe for a long time, and
" unnoticed by my huſband; whoſe fond-
" neſs for me, made him indulge me in
" every thing my extravagant deſires
" could ſuggeſt. While I was contribu-
" ting to his undoing, the partner of my
" crimes was equally rapid in his pro-
" greſs; and though he had very good
" buſineſs, he found himſelf going back
" in the world very faſt. As he could
" not attribute his miſcarriage to him-
" ſelf, he looked for the cauſes of it,
" and it was not long before he found
" them

"them out. A diſcovery of that nature
"affected him ſo ſtrongly, that he could
"not recover the diſtreſs and confuſion
"it threw him into. We took advan-
"tage of this inaction; and the compa-
"nion of my guilt, fearing the puniſh-
"ment due to his miſdeeds, perſuaded
"me to go off along with him. I yield-
"ed eaſily, dreading the reſentment of
"my unhappy huſband, and the re-
"proaches of my juſtly-incenſed family.
"London was the place where he could
"conceal his iniquity, and hoped to hide
"my ſhame. Alas! that was a vain
"hope. The little money we had
"brought along with us was ſoon ex-
"pended, and my paramour was unable to
"ſupply me any longer, rioting in afflu-
"ence, or indulging in plenty. Our con-
"dition and crimes ſtared us in the face,
"and we mutually accuſed one another.
"He quitted me in a ſhort time, not
"without uſing me in the moſt unhu-

" man manner, and making me acquaint-
" ed with the moſt loathſome diſeaſe to
" which human nature is ſubject. I then
" firſt knew the miſery of my ſituation:
" without money, without friends, diſ-
" tracted by the reproaches of my own
" conſcience, and having no one, but
" you to blame, for bringing me into
" this deplorable ſituation, I called upon
" death, and had actually arm'd my own
" hand againſt my exiſtence. An accident
" ſaved me: a perſon who took a lik-
" ing to me, had me cured, and with
" him I lived a while, till he, grown tired
" of me, again expoſed me to an un-
" bounded proſtitution. Upon this I de-
" pend for my daily bread, which it
" does not always ſupply me with. But,
" I am not yet ſo hardened, ſo callous to
" all thoſe feelings which muſt ſtill have
" a ſmall place in my breaſt, as to be
" unaffected at the ſight of you. This
" cauſed my ſudden exclamation: and the
" effect

"effect it had upon me, you were a
"witneſs to. This then, Sir, is the con-
"ſequence of your ſucceſs with me.
"With my huſband it has been equal-
"ly fatal; for I have ſeen his name a-
"mong the liſt of bankrupts lately in
"the papers. How little have you to
"boaſt of, Sir, when you reflect on what
"I have told you, and conſider, that the
"indulgence of your amorous inclinati-
"ons has brought ruin and misfortune
"upon two unhappy people, and their
"families? What amends can you make
"us, or what reparation can be received
"for the injuries you have done us?
"Your fortune may enable you to ſet
"up my huſband again in his buſineſs;
"and his affairs may be reinſtated: but can
"you reſtore that peace and quiet he
"enjoyed with me, while he thought me
"innocent? or can you wipe away the
"ſhame that my conduct has fixed up-
"on him? You may perhaps give me

" a competence to prevent my periſhing
" through want; you may enable me
" to quit a courſe of life, ſo infamous
" in itſelf, and ſo diſagreeable to my in-
" clinations: but can you make me for-
" get my guilt? or can you again tell
" me that I am innocent and pure as
" you found me? No, Sir, it exceeds
" your power: my life muſt continue
" guilty and wretched, and yours be a
" ſcene of unavailing repentance."

I remained ſilent during this addreſs, which affected me very ſtrongly.

" You have charged me with crimes," ſaid I, " that I did not think myſelf
" capable of committing."

" That may be," replied ſhe; " but you
" ſhould have conſidered where the firſt
" guilty ſtep you took would lead you,
" and how many misfortunes would be
" conſequent. If you had, I ſhould never
" have ſuffered what I have done; nor
" would you now have the mortification
" of

"of hearing yourſelf accuſed of crimes "you never intended to commit."

This converſation quickly diſpelled the fumes of the wine: and I could not help reflecting on what I had heard. It grieved and diſtreſſed me: and at that moment I moſt heartily repented my having ever ſeen her. I remained ſilent, for I had nothing to ſay in extenuation of my own conduct, revolving in my mind my paſt deeds, and my preſent deſigns. What amends were in my power, I reſolved to make her.

"You have declared that your preſent "manner of life is exceedingly diſagree- "able to you, and expreſs an inclina- "to quit it. If I ſupply you with the "means of ſubſiſtence, will you endea- "vour to abandon this courſe, an d re- "tire to ſome place where you are not "known."

"Yes," ſaid ſhe, "I will with the great- "eſt pleaſure; and pray to heaven every

" day of my life, to give you that par-
" don, which I ſhall entreat for."

" To-morrow then I will ſee you a-
" gain wherever you ſhall appoint, and
" will ſettle every thing for you."

She fixed a place to meet me in, and if I can judge of her ſentiments, by the thanks and acknowledgement ſhe poured forth, her repentance is ſincere, and ſhe will leave her preſent way of life. Farewell.

JAMES HILGROVE.

LETTER LXXIV

To the ſame.

I Returned home in a very different ſtate of mind from that in which I went from it. My notions were altered, and things preſented themſelves in another point of view to me. I no longer beheld myſelf, the harmleſs unthinking fellow I was accuſtomed

cuſtomed to conſider myſelf. On the contrary I appeared as black as my own reproaches could make me. I looked on myſelf as a villain, triumphing in the ruin of the innocent, the helpleſs, and the poor: and all that I found the fortune, which the merit of my anceſtors has left me, good for, was to indulge myſelf in making other people unhappy. This conſideration ſhocked me, and led on to many others of a ſimiliar nature. It made me reflect what I was then about, and my deſigns on Miſs Whately. I muſt allow, that were I to be as ſucceſsful with her as my heart could wiſh, that the ſame bad conſequences would not follow: ſhe is not married, and there could be only one perſon injured. But why ſhould I offer this injury to one perſon: ſhe may have a family who will partake of their daughter's ſhame, and I ſhall draw down the curſes of thoſe whom I wrong upon my head. I will not do it. But may I

not be impoſed upon? How do I know but ſhe has long trod in the paths of iniquity; and the preſent appearance of modeſty and reſerve is only calculated to enflame me, and obtain better terms? I was in doubt, and knew not how to have it reſolved. Determined to add no more to the long ſcore of follies, nay crimes which I had to charge myſelf with, I was reſolved to have the matter cleared up as ſoon as poſſible: and the method of doing it engroſſed my attention all the night. The next day I met the woman who had opened my eyes, and given me a ſenſe of the criminality of my own conduct. She had ſettled a plan for her future life, and informed me of it. It was a very prudent one, and met my approbation. I aſked her if fifty pounds a year would be ſufficient to ſupport her. She did not expect ſo much, and declared it exceeded her hopes. I bade her enquire after her huſband: and that I would take care to ſend him

him ſome allowance in ſuch a manner as he ſhould never know whence it came. She replied, that he had been ill, and was afraid that he was dead, as ſhe had not had any account of him for a long time. It turned out ſo after wards. That ſhe might not be dependent upon my pleaſure, I ordered my attorney to get a deed prepared, and put it out of my power to revoke it. This will keep her above want for the reſt of her life: and if ſhe returns to her former ways, I truſt the ſin will not be imputed to me. My next employment was to learn how Miſs Whately bore my treatment of her the preceding night: and accordingly I purſued my way to Mrs. Lewis's. She was ſtill indiſpoſed, and I had the beſt opportunity of ſpeaking to Miſs Whately. It was a conſiderable time before ſhe made her appearance: and left me to my own reflections, which at that period were not the moſt agreeable companions in the world. However, in that time I determined on my mode of

proceeding, and if I found her really a woman of virtue and honour, and ignorant of the perſon's character with whom ſhe was, that I would inform her of every thing ſhe ought to know, and leave it to herſelf to proceed afterwards as ſhe pleaſed. I had juſt formed this reſolution when ſhe entered the room. Her addreſs was cool and diſtant; her face ſhewed ſhe had not forgotten the behaviour of the preceding evening; and I, who remembered it perfectly well, was not ſurpriſed to ſee her offended.

"I know," ſaid I, "you are angry "with me for laſt night's work."

"Have I not reaſon! Mr. Hilgrove: "but I ſuppoſe you are come to make "apologies. You need not: I will attri- "bute to the ſtrength and quantity of the "wine you drank, your extraordinary con- "duct."

"There

"There was a great deal of it owing to "that, I will confeſs, and you are very "good to allow for it."

"What, will you not lay the fault intire-"ly upon it?"

"No, there was ſomething elſe in my "head beſides wine."

"Nay, now you will put it out of my "power to excuſe you. But what elſe was "it that made you behave in that man-"ner?"

"Love, almighty love, mingled with "a little wine will do a great deal; and as "my offence was owing to the former, I "expect you will forgive it."

"That is putting it upon a footing I "had no notion of: but if you recollect, "there was ſomething in your conduct "and language ſo foreign, ſo different "from every thing I had ſeen before, that "it appeared to me totally unaccountable; "and from thence I concluded wine oc-

"caſioned

" caſioned it; but you ſay it aroſe from " another cauſe."

" It did, indeed; and now let us be a " little ſerious. Upon my honour, Miſs " Whately, I have a very great regard " for you. It is more than regard—it is " affection. This makes me intereſted in " your welfare. Will you anſwer me one " queſtion?"

" Yes, if I like it."

" How long have you been acquainted " with Mrs. Lewis?"

" About three months."

" Where did you firſt come acquainted " with her?"

" At Dieppe in Normandy."

" Excuſe me for being ſo particular, " there are reaſons for it, which you will " acknowledge to be good ones, when I " acquaint you with them. In what " manner did you come into this woman's " care and power?"

" To

"To anſwer that queſtion will lead to "a diſcovery of my affairs which I have "hitherto kept ſecret, and I do not chuſe "to reveal them."

"Does Mrs. Lewis know them?"

"Undoubtedly ſhe does: or how ſhould "I expect to be received into her family, "or that ſhe would take notice of one "who is a ſtranger to her—Certainly, or "ſhe would never have taken me."

"And you have no other knowledge of "Mrs. Lewis?"

"None, indeed: but there is ſomething "myſterious in your manner of ſpeaking, "that implies more than I already know."

"There may be ſomething worth in-"forming you," ſaid I, "if you deal can-'didly with me, and let me know how "you firſt came into her hands. You may "depend upon my honour, and the up-"rightneſs and integrity of my conduct to "you in this inſtance; nor ſhall you have "any reaſon to repent your repoſing a con-

"fidence

"fidence in me. Look upon me as a
"friend who is concerned in your happi-
"neſs and welfare."

"Though I cannot conceive your rea-
"ſons for talking to me in this manner,
"yet I will have ſo far a reliance on you,
"as to make you acquainted with my hi-
"ſtory, and the manner in which I came
"into Mrs. Lewis's cuſtody. Though I
"may be obliged to accuſe myſelf of much
"imprudence, I ſhall deal very candidly
"and openly."

"My father was a gentleman who had
"a ſmall eſtate and a large family, conſe-
"quently he could not afford to give us
"a large fortune. However, had he lived
"longer than he did, it would have been
"much larger. He died when I was very
"young, being the laſt child he had. My
"mother did not ſurvive him long; and I
"was left entirely in my elder brother's
"power. Some of my ſiſters were mar-
"ried,

"ried, and others ſettled in the world,
"and I alone remained with him. When
"about ſeventeen, a neighbour of his, a gen-
"tleman-farmer, poſſeſſed of a very good
"property, took it into his head to like
"me, and demanded me of my brother;
"who looking upon it as a very good and
"advantageous match, preſſed me to ac-
"cept his propoſal with much earneſtneſs:
"and in this he was ſupported by his wife,
"a woman of a very bad temper, who
"had abſolute dominion over him, and
"who never could agree with me. She
"ſaw that I had an averſion for Mr. Cow-
"ley; for he was above forty conſiderably,
"and was diſagreeable both in his perſon
"and manners: therefore, to vex me, ſhe
"ſtill urged the propriety of this match,
"and how happy I ſhould eſteem myſelf
"to have ſo good an offer. I uſed every
"means in my power to perſuade Mr.
"Cowley to have done with me, and not
"think any more of a perſon who could

"not

" not like him. But, ſupported by the
" authoriiy of my brother and his wife, he
" perſiſted in plaguing me. As this was
" the firſt vexation I knew, it was the more
" inſupportable; and I projected a ſcheme
" of eſcaping from it as ſoon as I could.
" But to whom or where I ſhould go, was the
" queſtion. My other brothers were neither
" able nor willing to ſupport me; becauſe
" they had all a dependance upon their
" elder brother. My ſiſters were in the
" ſame ſituation, and would have refuſed
" to ſhelter me. My thoughts were bent
" on a Mrs. Creſwell, an old lady who was
" of a different religion from the eſtabliſh-
" ed one, and who had formerly been very
" great at my brother's; but having been
" offended by his wife, a coolneſs ſubſiſted
" between them, and ſhe never came near
" the houſe. One cauſe of her having been
" ill uſed by my ſiſter-in-law was, for hav-
" ing taken particular notice of me, whom
" I really believe ſhe hated in her heart.
" To

"To this old lady I applied; and ſhe pro-
"miſed to receive and take care of me:
"and in this ſhe not only obeyed the dic-
"tates of friendſhip ſhe had conceived for
"me, but alſo gratified her reſentment
"againſt my ſiſter-in-law, whom ſhe ab-
"uſed upon every occaſion. I was about
"eighteen when I effected my eſcape, and
"was received by her with a great deal of
"tenderneſs and affection. Here, though
"I had ſhelter from the perſecution of my
"brother, whom ſhe ſkreened me from;
"yet there was ſomething that pre-
"vented my enjoying all the quiet and ſa-
"tisfaction I expected. Mrs. Creſwell
"was old, and bigotted to her religion.
"She thought the moſt meritorious action
"of her life would be making a convert
"of me; and, being encouraged in her
"pious deſign by the teachers of her
"church, ſhe ſet about it with great zeal
"and earneſtneſs. For a year and an half
"I endured her admonitions, and was ob-
"liged to liſten to her arguments, and
"thoſe

" thoſe of her perſuaſion. At laſt ſhe was
" inclined to take me over to France, where
" that is the prevailing religion, where it is
" celebrated in all its pomp, and the ſhew
" is calculated to impreſs young and ten-
" der minds with an extraordinary idea of
" it. We ſet out, and arrived at Dieppe;
" but Mrs. Creſwell was ill with the
" voyage, which her advanced years ren-
" dered fatal to her. We had met with
" bad weather; and though I was as ill as
" ſhe; yet my conſtitution being good, I
" ſoon recovered it. She languiſhed three
" months before ſhe died; and becauſe I
" would not declare myſelf of her church,
" ſhe would not leave me a farthing; and
" my brother having refuſed to allow me
" any thing, I was left entirely deſtitute:
" for the King of France, who, according
" to the cuſtoms of that country, ſeizes all
" the effects of ſtrangers that die in
" his dominions, took poſſeſſion of all
" Mrs. Creſwell's goods and money. My
" ſituation was extremely diſagreeable: in a
" ſtrange

"ſtrange country, without hardly an ac-
"quaintance, and my protectreſs dead in
"the houſe with me. Mrs. Lewis was
"then indiſpoſed, and hearing that a coun-
"trywoman of her's was in trouble, ſhe paid
"me a viſit, and behaved ſo kindly and
"friendly to me, that I made no ſcruple
"of informing her of my ſituation. She
"expreſſed much concern at it, and of-
"fered me the ſame refuge that I had
"found with Mrs. Creſwell. I gladly ac-
"cepted a propoſal that at once extricated
"me out of all my difficulties which I
"had been plunged in. We ſtaid a
"month in France, where ſhe had ſome
"relations, and I have been two months
"in London with her; and here I muſt
"ſtay till I come of age, and the law will
"oblige my brother to pay me the ſmall
"fortune which is due to me, and which
"I muſt endeavour to turn into ſome way
"of buſineſs that may enable me to get my
"living: for I have no hopes of receiving
"any favours from my brother."

Thus

Thus ſhe ended the account of herſelf; and you may ſuppoſe it gave me pleaſure to find that ſhe was not what I had all along ſo unjuſtly imagined her to be. My regard for her was increaſed by the frank and open manner in which ſhe communicated this matter; and I was rejoiced to think I could be of ſervice to her. Accordingly, in the moſt tender and delicate manner poſſible, I informed her of her ſituation; and made her acquainted with Mrs. Lewis's hiſtory. It gave her a great deal of uneaſineſs.

"I am ſorry," ſaid ſhe, "to find my-
"ſelf in ſuch a condition; for the ill-na-
"tured world will judge of me without
"compaſſion or truth. The extraordinary
"manner in which I left my brother's
"houſe will be a foundation for their ma-
"lice; and I ſhall be condemned, though
"innocent. Neither is it in my power to
"behave ungratefully to a woman who has
"been ſo kind to me: but ſhe ought to
"have reflected, that every body muſt ſup-
"poſe me to have been in the ſame ſitua-
"tion

"tion with herſelf, when they found me "living in the ſame houſe with her."

"I confeſs to you, it was the firſt no-"tion that I conceived of you; and "that which occaſioned my behaviour laſt "night."

"I don't blame you; but you ſhould "not have judged too haſtily of me."

I bore the reproof, and acknowledged myſelf to blame. We then conſulted how ſhe ſhould be removed to ſome place of character: for if my affection for her ſhould induce me to do a fooliſh thing, I ſhould not chuſe to marry a girl out of Mrs. Lewis's houſe. I adviſed her to write to her brother, and endeavour to be reconciled to him, and if that failed, ſome other methods ſhould be tried. She permits me to viſit her, and I don't know what may be the conſequence of this affair. Her brother lives in the neighbourhood of our friend Thompſon, ſo that if I ſhould go to ſee her at her brother's houſe, I ſhall reſide with him. I muſt entreat you to

recommend her to your mother. For Lady Stanton's opinion of her would go further with me than any other perſon's. Nor do I think ſhe would be diſpleaſed at having Polly Whately with her. There is an innocent vivacity and ſprightlineſs in her, that would ſerve to amuſe ſome of her more ſerious hours. Your worthy mother's goodneſs of heart, and ſingular humanity would make her forget the troubles ſhe has met with, and re-eſtabliſh her confidence in herſelf, which ſhe ſeems to have loſt. I was never more pleaſed at a triumph, than I am at this defeat. Adieu my good friend, and believe me to be

Your's, truly,

JAMES HILGROVE.

The END of the FOURTH VOLUME.

15